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ABSTRACT

This book addresses the basic issues that require resolution in the design of an effective, comprehensive independent living program for adolescents who are moving out of foster care placements. It provides recommendations for improving the delivery of services and encourages adoption of certain policies and practices to improve conditions immediately in the delivery of independent living services. The book also provides a blueprint for future actions for consideration by adolescent independent living programs. The text presents a working document approach to program development. Following an introductory section, section 2 concerns additional elements of a comprehensive plan, section 3 deals with planning a project approach, and section 4 reports on general issues and themes. Sections 5 through 17 cover specific programming areas needed for development: information/public relations materials; advisory boards; program incentives; staff specialization; overall training; independent living case plans; volunteers and mentors; teenage conferences; jobs and vocational programs; housing; follow-up after the transition and post-discharge services; mini- or seed grants; and special groups. Section 18 lists overall program recommendations. Appendixes making up about half the document provide supporting documentation, including federal program instructions and guidelines, state licensing regulations, the Youth Application Short Form, evaluation materials, an agency work plan form, and an annotated resource section. (NB)

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Independent Living Program Strategies for the 1990s: Developing a Comprehensive Adolescent Independent Living Program Plan
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Preface/Acknowledgements

Preparing Adolescents for Their Exit From Out-of-Home Care

In the early to mid 1980s, working on a small federal grant, I became involved in the development of a comprehensive model for adolescent independent living. That work culminated in a text entitled *Independent Living Strategies: A Program to Prepare Adolescents for Their Exit from Foster Care*. That text provided a practical model and presentation of the concept that independent living should become much more than the movement of an adolescent out of foster care: "it becomes the preparation for the transition out of care, the management of the transition itself, and the follow-up after transition is accomplished."

The model stressed flexibility for the adolescent and agency to plan a multi-level program that would allow youth to become partially or fully financially independent as early as 17 years of age. In addition, the text promoted benefits for adolescents, public agencies, allied social service agencies, and the real possibility that substantive contributions could be made to child welfare practice and theory.

The efficacy of a "fresh approach" to the delivery of adolescent services was thought to be borne out by use of the model and development of new actions that supported a comprehensive program.

Nationally, the field of child welfare was receptive. Youth advocates and program staff noticed a change in child welfare demographic—an older youth in out-of-home care: more adolescents with multiple placements: higher more severe levels of abuse, neglect, and exploitation: and growing numbers of discharges from the out-of-home-care system who were becoming a part of the impoverished and homeless populations.

In 1984, a lawsuit in New York (*Palmer* vs. *Cuomo*) opened the door to serious national consideration of the problems of youth in the out-of-home-care system. Committees in both houses of Congress leveled hearings and staff energy at this issue, with resulting legislation that has changed the face of public and private agency adolescent service delivery (1987—P.L. 99-272, etc.). Foster and residential care, treatment centers, correctional facilities, and psychiatric hospitals that serve youth became more aware of the need for pre-discharge, discharge, and post-discharge services for their clients. Public and private agencies started to progress more fully towards addressing their responsibilities as surrogate parents—"in loco-parentis."

Federal funding lines for adolescent independent living programming, originating in 1987 under P.L. 99-272, have been reauthorized so that programs will carry through fiscal year 1992 and beyond. Some states have added local dollars. Some have drafted new legislation on behalf of youth, and others have updated antiquated or unforgiving segments of existing statutes. Public and private child welfare and social service agencies have joined together in intensive supportive lobbying efforts both locally and nationally.

Independent living preparation training is being provided to out-of-home-care youth, foster parents and other primary caregivers, social workers, case managers, caseworkers, residential child care staff, foster care reviewers, family court personnel, and administrators and managers of public and private child welfare programs. National resource centers have added independent living to their objectives and entrepreneurs have created a small cottage industry to serve all of these "newly identified needs.

Yet, there is still much to be done. A higher level of information sharing on a national level needs to take place. Research is needed to follow-up on youth as they venture through programs and their new "self-sufficiency" experiences. What are the benefits of life skills classes, housing alternatives, subsidies, trust funds, mentors, volunteers, and programs that start at an earlier age? All of these questions and more need attention so that adolescent independent living programming can grow and develop just as teens must.

This text is an attempt to add to my original writings the many facets of programming that I have gleaned from those who do the real work with the youth of America—staffs of out-of-home-care programs. The readers of this text and I both have had and will continue to have opportunities to refine our methods. The end result will be better programs and greater opportunities for youth who have suffered enough in their short lifetimes.

This book is dedicated to all the professionals who have worked so diligently over the last 10 years or so, to bring adolescent independent living concepts to the forefront of the child welfare effort in the United States.

I would also like to thank the many programs whose willingness to let me be a part of their planning and ongoing management efforts made this text possible. In addition, I have discussed this work with several hundred practitioners, youths, and students in courses, conferences, institutes, seminars, workshops, and during on-site visits to homes, facilities, and programs. Many of the ideas in this book have their origins in these dialogues, which I hope proved as stimulating to my audiences as they did to me.

I have tried to provide appropriate credit in the text to authors whose work has shaped my own endeavors. But citations are not able to convey the extent of my indebtedness to some of my colleagues whose writings and informal communications have so influenced me that I am unable to say where their ideas leave off and mine begin.

Finally, I hope that my future work, the work of my colleagues and the youths involved in independent living, leads to stronger programming efforts on behalf of all young people who strive to be self-sufficient and live interdependently.

William V. Griffin
Brendan Associates
January 1992

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Section 1:

Introduction

Child welfare agencies throughout the nation are called upon to respond to the needs of growing numbers of youths in out-of-home care. The early 1980s saw a dramatic decrease in the out-of-home-care population—from 550,000 in 1980 to approximately 270,000 by 1984—because of P.L. 96-272 and permanency planning efforts. As the decade progressed, the makeup of this youthful population changed as well.

Demographics initially showed a dramatic shift in age ranges so that, by 1987, a reported 50 to 51 percent of the out-of-home care group was 13-21 years-old, an increase from 30 to 31 percent earlier in the decade. An estimated 30 percent of the overall population was 11 to 15 years of age. At this time, nationally, the child welfare system was taking in fewer young children. In addition, it was not unusual to encounter casework staff with caseloads made up of 75 to 100 percent teenagers.

Thus far in the 1990s, there have been further changes in the demographic makeup of this group as well as in the overall number of youths in care. Projections in 1991 place the out-of-home-care population between 400,000 to 450,000 youths. The teen population seems to be remaining proportionally the same as mentioned above; therefore, there are greater numbers of adolescents in out-of-home care. Studies also estimate that fewer than one in four of these adolescents will return to their own homes.

The number of youths who, in any given year, will be discharged from care because they have reached the age of majority also continues to increase—rising from 16,000 in 1984 to 29,000 in 1989. In terms of the system that seeks to serve them, they are children one day and adults the next.

During the 1980s, the U.S. Congress, in a series of hearings and reviews of a lawsuit against the city and state of New York on behalf of out-of-home-care youth, began to put funding in place for child welfare approaches to programming for these youths. Important questions began to get national attention: How could agencies better prepare young persons in their care and custody for discharge and adulthood? What resources would be needed to enable young people to become self-sufficient and independent?

In 1987, with the passage of P.L. 99-272 and in subsequent amendments to the *Social Security Act*, federal legislation established the Independent Living Initiatives. Under these acts of Congress, funding was provided for a wide range of services for out-of-home-care youths to enable them to move from out-of-home care in a more planned manner. A pattern of support began to be formalized to help youths gain the skills they need to move from out-of-home care to independence and self-sufficiency.

To create appropriate levels of support, public and private child caring agencies have had to make basic changes in their programs for these children. Initiating these changes has required clarification on many issues concerning the development, operation, and follow-up of adolescent independent living programming.

A successful transition to independent living is a task facing every young adult in or out of agency care. Reaching that goal of self-sufficiency for children who are in agency care requires planning for implementation of a comprehensive, individualized, and well-coordinated program of services. The success of the program can be measured against clear objectives: In terms of planning and delivery of services, does the program help young people attain the highest level of self-sufficiency possible by the date of their legal emancipation? Does the planning component of the program lay the base for continuing growth and development for the individual youth?

An Agency-Wide Approach

The development of an agency-wide approach to prepare adolescents for independent living needs to consider where youths reside, as a key concern in designing effective, timely, and efficient delivery of services. Youths in out-of-home placement may be in a residential treatment facility, a group home, an emergency shelter, or foster family setting depending upon their functioning, skill levels, and variations of available resources in individual states. Providing independent living services in each of these settings, along with services offered in school, after school, and in work settings, adds strength and purpose to the program.

To be most effective, the agency needs to design an approach that guides the development and implementation of an independent living program within the present out-of-home care system. Changes required in the present out-of-home care system to accommodate this recommendation are central to this text. They are based on the assumption that adolescents can and will participate in the community, rather than be isolated from it. Making appropriate plans and services available for out-of-home children means that the independent living program must expand efforts to improve the support of the community and creative use of limited resources.

The success of these efforts will, in the long term, depend on the ability of adolescents to develop skills that allow them to function as providers of their own needs. As they learn, grow, and mature, they must become advocates, even policy makers, for themselves and their peers who have similar needs.

If relatively unskilled foster children are to assume these unaccustomed roles in the future, they will require training in competencies that are quite different from those offered in traditional social services programs. The role of the social worker must shift from clinician to technical consultant who develops or adapts resources necessary for independent living and who provides training and assistance to the adolescent foster child and primary caregivers.

The Process of Change

Identifying the concerns of children exiting out-of-home care by listening to their ideas and suggestions for improvement is an important step in the process of community and agency change. Information from potential and actual program participants about those aspects of community life that encourage or impede self-sufficiency is most useful in guiding development efforts. Allied public service agencies and private agencies also are sources of useful information.

Other significant steps in the process of agency and program change involve specifying the personnel, finances, and other resources required to take action and identifying resources available in the agency and community to support change. When it is clear what level of resources exists to support program change, strategies can then be developed to acquire additional resources that may be required.

To capture the attention of prospective support groups, it is important to enlist the aid of the volunteer/community sector in program development, publicize the purpose and need of an independent living program, and increase agency visibility. Activities must be chosen to maximize the likelihood of immediate, visible, and permanent results. For example, a Chamber of Commerce might be enlisted to spearhead a campaign to provide teenagers with after-school work. The independent living program can help maximize benefits from such an effort by publicizing the collaborative action of finding jobs for adolescents who will soon exit out-of-home care. The critical step in program development is that the agency takes the initiative to work in a broader community context, establish new public policies, and create alternative resources for the out-of-home-care population.

Legislative Background and Context

Federal Laws

Dramatic changes have occurred in child welfare nationally since the passage of Public Law 96-272—*The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980.* Reunification of children and families, application of "reasonable efforts" standards, and stronger efforts to provide a wide range of support services for adoptions (particularly of special needs and minority children) have accelerated these changes. In addition, the *Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985* (P.L. 99-272), through Section 477 of Title IV-E of the *Social Security Act*, authorized funds to states for fiscal years 1987 and 1988 for service programs and activities to assist eligible children in Title IV-E foster care to make the transition from foster care to independent living.

The *Technical and Miscellaneous Revenue Act of 1988* (P.L. 100-647) further amended Section 477 to continue authorization through fiscal year 1989. It extended eligibility to any youth, at least age 16, in foster care under the responsibility of the state. The state also may include support for any child who had foster care maintenance payments discontinued on or after his or her 16th birthday, so long as the child is picked up in the program within six months of the date of discontinuance.

The *Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1989* (P.L. 101-239) authorized the Independent Living Program for federal fiscal years 1990 through 1992. The *Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990* (P.L. 101-508) also amended Section 477 to extend, at state option, eligibility for independent living services supported with federal funds to children formerly in foster care, up to age 21. The Acts of 1989 and 1990 also provide for increased federal funding—FY 1990–$50 million; FY 1991–$60 million; FY 1992–$70 million—and a requirement for a state match of funds above the original federal authorization of $45 million.

The base allocations for the states range from $8,378 in Alaska to $8,023,999 in California (formulated on the basis of 1984 statistics for a state's eligible children).

State Use of Federal Expenditures

Under Section 477(e)(1) of the *Social Security Act* (the Act), each state is allotted a share of the amount appropriated for independent living equal to the ratio of the state's average monthly number of children receiving Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments in fiscal year 1984 to the average monthly number of children receiving such payments for all states in fiscal year 1984.

For fiscal year 1990, the amount appropriated was $50 million. Appropriations have steadily increased through fiscal years 1991 and 1992, and are expected to continue to do so under new authorizations. States initially did not need to provide matching funds to receive their "base" amounts. Ensuing legislation has added a required match from states to receive the additional funding. Furthermore, states may not use federal funds to replace already existing state efforts; federal funds are to be used to supplement, not replace, state efforts.

Eligible youths must have attained the age of 16 in order to be eligible. States electing to serve non-Title IV-E-eligible children (including children who are no longer Title IV-E-eligible by virtue of age) may provide independent living services to all children who are in foster care under the responsibility of the state and who remain "children" under the definition of the state (i.e., have not reached the state's age of majority).

The state may also, at its option, provide independent living services to any child (whether Title IV-E eligible or not) for whom foster care maintenance payments were made by a state and whose care or foster care payments were discontinued on or after the date the child became 16, so long as services are provided within six months of the date of discontinuance (Section 477 (a)(2)(c)). Effective October 1, 1990, Public Law 101-508 amended Section 477 (a)(2)(c) to extend, at state option, eligibility for independent living services supported with federal funds to children formerly in foster care, up to age 21.

Programs and Activities

Expenditures must be related to the specific purposes of the Independent Living Initiatives. As stated in Section 477 (d) of the Act, such purposes may include programs to:

- Enable participants to seek a high school diploma or its equivalent or to take part in appropriate vocational training;

- Provide training in daily living skills: budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, and career planning;
- Provide for individual and group counseling;
- Integrate and coordinate services otherwise available to participants;
- Provide for the establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the program;
- Provide each participant with a written transitional independent living plan, which shall be based on an assessment of his/her needs, and which shall be incorporated into his/her case plan, as described in section 475(1); and
- Provide participants with other services and assistance designed to improve their transition to independent living.

States may use varying methods and strategies to achieve the objectives of the program. They may include an assessment of existing programmatic and systemic barriers to the successful transition of a child in foster care to independent living. Training programs for agency staff may be a critical element. Specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers may assist in the development and improvement of an important link for the child between dependence and independence.

Other activities under the Title IV-E-IL program may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ***Educational Counseling***

  This includes counseling and other similar assistance related to educational and vocational training, preparation for a General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.) or for higher education, job readiness, job search assistance, and placement programs.

- ***Basic Living Skills***

  This includes counseling and instruction in basic living skills, such as money management, home management, consumer skills, parenting, health care, access to community resources, transportation, housing options, and location.

- ***Personal Counseling***

  This includes individual and group counseling, workshops and conferences for improved self-esteem and self confidence, and interpersonal and social skills training and development.

- ***Program Coordination***

  This includes coordinating with other components of the state's independent living program, such as supervised practice living, as well as establishing linkages with federal agencies and state and local organizations such as: the Department of Education; special and vocational education programs; local education agencies; state and community colleges; the Department of Labor; Employment and Training Administration programs (including the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which administers Private Industry Councils (PICs) and the Job Corps); vocational rehabilitation; volunteer programs (such as ACTION); medical and dental public and private providers; state and community mental health agencies and organizations; and local housing advisors.

- ***Outreach Programs***

  This includes establishing an outreach system that would encourage youths currently in foster care to participate in independent living programs; and developing community organizational efforts and ongoing support networks for youths leaving foster care.

- ***Family Involvement***

  This includes involvement of relatives and/or foster parents in the development of the youths' independent living skills and training youths in decision making, planning, and time management.

Prohibition: Title IV-E Independent Living funds may *not* be used to provide room or board for youths receiving independent living services.

Public and Private Child Care Sectors Working Together

Many states and local jurisdictions have developed approaches for the delivery of independent living services using the private child-caring sector. In fact, prior to federal independent living legislation and funding (1987), the predominance of adolescent independent living service delivery was provided by the private child-caring sector. This sector has, in many instances, developed proven independent living programs.

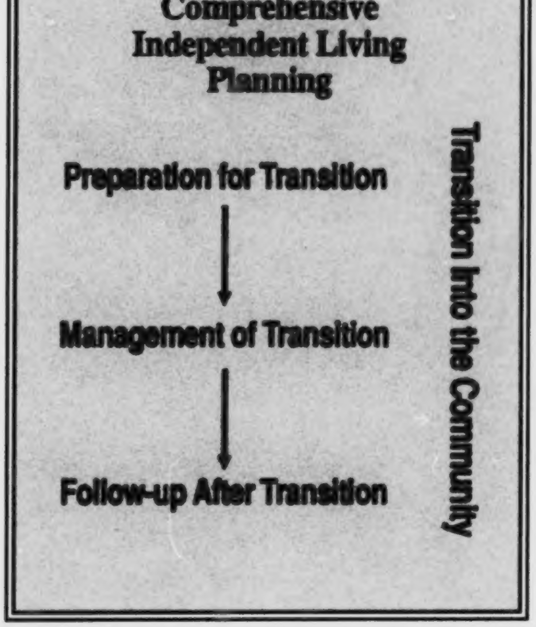
Private sector providers (in most instances also known as POS—purchase of service providers) now need to develop a greater understanding of the federal and state role in this important youth service area. Having some understanding of how their state or county governmental independent living system is funded and operates will hopefully provide additional avenues for expanding their role as POS agencies. In many instances, the private youth-caring organization can gear-up and provide stronger life skills programs more cost-effectively than the public agency. In addition, the private agency is often already serving a large number of youths—if not all of the youths in their facility—who are wards of the public system.

Private sector agencies need to develop proposals for independent living that allow them to tap into the existing state efforts or the planning of new efforts under the federal IL initiatives. Each state has a person listed as the contact or conduit between the federal government (Agency for Children, Youth, and Families—ACYF) and the state office receiving the funds. Private sector agencies should contact this person, obtain a copy of the state's federal plan on independent living, and research ways POS services might be provided or existing state AILP services can be tapped.

Where necessary, this process can provide an opportunity to revamp present group facilities and programs towards the goals and objectives of the state's independent living plan. Sharing of youth skills training, staff training, preparation of primary caregivers, and clarifying the referral process are all benefits of such an effort. In addition, gaps could be identified that the private sector might be funded to fill.

Private sector organizations' usually strong community and philanthropic orientation allows them, at times, access to much more viable avenues for programming than the public sector. The private child-care agency often is accustomed to using alternative sources of funding such as churches, foundations, and private businesses and has in the past and can in the future often more readily develop true public/private partnerships. Funding supplements can be a realistic approach in this sector. In many instances, the private sector can secure foundation and corporate support where the public sector can not.

Figure 1-1
Comprehensive Independent Living Planning


Preparation for Transition
Management of Transition
Follow-up After Transition
Transition into the Community

Partnerships between the public and private child-caring agencies are essential to the development of any truly comprehensive agency-wide approach to AILP which serves all youth in out-of-home care. Both the large and small, state and county, group home and treatment center programs, and juvenile correctional facilities can benefit from independent living programs.

Comprehensive Independent Living Planning

Previous studies and actions nationally have encouraged the development of a comprehensive plan for delivery of adolescent independent living services for youths in the out-of-home-care system. Elements in such a program include (*see Figure 1-1*):

- Preparation for the transition out of out-of-home care and into the community,
- Management of the transition into the community, and
- Follow-up after the transition into the community is accomplished.

Transforming the desire for such a comprehensive program into a practical, workable plan will require changes in policy and existing programs. Additional fiscal support will be needed, both public and private. Staff who work directly with youths may need to adjust their thinking about key issues such as a shift in how workers view their role—from only caring for youths to preparing youths. Certainly such an effort requires the understanding and support of the general public if it is to succeed in the long term.

Scope of the Text

This book addresses the basic issues that require resolution in the design of an effective, comprehensive program. It provides recommendations for improving the delivery of services and encourages adoption of certain policies and practices to improve conditions immediately in the delivery of independent living ser-

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vices. The book also provides a blueprint for future actions for consideration by adolescent independent living programs.

For the purposes of this text, certain shorthand terminology is used in referring to independent living programs. The most common of these are defined as follows:

- **AILP**—Adolescent Independent Living Program
- **ILP**—Independent Living Program
- **POS**—Purchase of Service Providers
- **Out-of-Home Care**—all settings in which a youth is living separate from his/her biological parents and under the care and custody of an agency.

The remainder of this text presents a working document approach to program development. Section 2 concerns Additional Elements of A Comprehensive Plan; Section 3 deals with Planning A Project Approach; Section 4 reports on General Issues and Themes; Sections 5 through 17 cover specific programming areas needed for development; and Section 18 lists Overall Program Recommendations. The Appendices offer supportive documentation.

Section 2:

Additional Elements of a Comprehensive Plan

The need for independent living services for adolescents nationally has been documented in many publications and verified by my own meetings over the last eight years with many professionals, agency staffs, government officials, and community representatives. How to address that need raises a number of questions. What are appropriate next steps? How does an agency most effectively move forward to develop a system- or agency-wide program? How does present funding for independent living services fit in planning a more comprehensive program?

Defining Independent Living Services

A vital first step is to reach agreement on the definition of independent living services and programs. In my experience, this is best accomplished by first identifying the skills youths need if they are to be successful when on their own. Next, determine how and when those skills can and should be taught. Some of these basic skills are shown in *Figure 2-1* on the following page.

These lists are, at times, not clearly distinct from each other. In general, they represent tangible or concrete skills and functional or intangible skills necessary to enable youths to gain self-sufficiency. There are several considerations:

- It is common to first emphasize acquisition of tangible skills in independent living programs. It has been found, however, that knowledge of the tangible skills alone is virtually useless unless accompanied by some degree of proficiency in the intangible skills.
- It takes a long time, perhaps a lifetime, to master both sets of skills. Programs or policies, such as federal legislation, may say that agencies should begin to prepare youths for independent living at the age of 16 or 17. In reality, preparation must start at younger ages to be most successful.

Phases of Independent Living Preparation

It is instructive to consider the path of development for "normal" children as they move toward self-sufficiency. Developmentally, youths begin to acquire both tangible and non-tangible support skills at a very early age and continue to refine them throughout a lifetime. Early

Figure 2-1
Independent Living Skills

Hard or Concrete Skills	Soft or Intangible Skills
Job/Employment (Getting)	Self-Esteem/Image Enhancement
Job Maintenance (Keeping)	Conflict Resolution
Educational/Vocational	Communication
Money Management	Decision Making
Home Maintenance	Problem Solving
Consumer	Goal Setting/Planning
Legal Rights/Responsibilities	Interpersonal Relationships
Locating and Using Community Resources	Anger Management
Health Care	Social Skills
Transportation	Separation and Loss
Parenting	Time Management
Housing (Getting)	Dealing With Discrimination

skills are learned informally (learned behavior) from family and other primary caregivers. Children enhance these early skills through formal learning or adaptation through experience with the surrounding world (adaptive behavior). Thus, it is appropriate and useful to view independent living preparation as a series of events occurring along a timeline or continuum.

Phases I and II

During **Phase I**, basic living skills are acquired informally by observing family members, repeating techniques observed, and through trial and error. For example, we learn how to do the dishes by watching and participating in the process. A young child learns that at red lights we "stop," and that at green lights we "go" or proceed.

During **Phase II**, basic skills are acquired through formal instruction and formal activities, perhaps in school or as an extra-curricular activity. Usually someone outside the family is responsible for the instruction. Formal activities may occur individually or in groups.

Phases III and IV

In **Phase III**, learning is primarily experiential. The youth's living arrangement has changed. He or she is no longer living with the adults who were primary caregivers, but is in a protected or supervised living situation. *Protected* is the key word. The environment must provide built-in *safety nets* so that if the youth makes a poor decision the results are not devastating. Life in a college dormitory is a good example of Phase-III protection coupled with increasing independence, so is life in a military barracks for the new recruit.

Figure 2-2
Phases of Independent Living Preparation

PHASE I	PHASE II	MOVE OUT	PHASE III	PHASE IV
Informal Learning	Formal Learning		Supervised Independent Living (Practice Living)	Self-Sufficiency

In **Phase IV**, the safety net is, to a very large extent, removed. Often there is a financial distinction between Phases III and IV: Phase III frequently offers some level of financial support; in Phase IV, we are expected to pay our own way. However, even though we are self-sufficient financially, we usually choose to maintain ties with the adults who raised us or others who played an important

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role in our past. We also engage in redefining our relationships with those whom we encountered and learned from in Phases I and II. Often, they become important sources of support as we encounter the difficulties of life. That support may come in the form of a telephone contact for advice, financial assistance, or tangible goods (food, clothing, and even shelter). The redefining process is how we create our own "personal support system," or lifeline.

Since this model offers support that leads a child in a "normal" environment to self-sufficiency, clearly there is value in attempting to replicate it—as conditions permit—for youths in out-of-home care.

These youths have opportunities every day to learn skills through informal methods (Phase I). There is a recognized need to develop special "formal" training programs (Phase II) that create opportunities for youths to practice new skills in the "real" world. Activities in Phases I and II lay the foundation for success in Phases III and IV. Youths who do not develop some level of competency in Phases I and II skills will limit their possibilities for success when they move out on their own.

Phases V and VI

When youths develop their skills to a higher level and are ready to "move out," they will need to have options for living arrangements as varied as they are individual. This is a legitimate concern in program development planning. For discussion purposes, let's add Phase V and Phase VI to this model (*see Figure 2-3*).

Figure 2-3

PHASE V	PHASE VI
Return to Phase III	Self-Sufficient Again

In the United States today, it is not uncommon to see young people moving into Phase IV independent living much later in life. Some studies report that those moving into Phase IV living now are on average about 26 years of age. Further, many Phase IV individuals move back "home" for support at a time of crisis. Divorce, economic hardships, or other breakdowns often will drive a young person home to regroup (Phase V) before striking out in an independent way again (Phase VI). This phenomenon has recently been labeled the "Boomerang Society" effect.

The out-of-home-care youth often does not have the possibility of a Phase III, much less a Phase V or VI for regrouping. Federal legislation and the ensuing Health and Human Services regulations break new ground in creating some form of Phase V/VI for these youths. Public Law 101-58 amended Section 477 of Title IV- E of the *Social Security Act* to extend, at state option, eligibility for independent living services supported with federal funds to children formerly in foster care, up to age 21 (see: Appendix A, Part 2, ACYF-IM- 90-26, Information Memorandum, 12-12-90). Some states (such as New York) are considering or have enacted departmental policies that allow a youth to leave out-of-home care, try out self-sufficiency for a while, then return during a time of hardship. Private sector agencies also are exploring and developing after-care components in their programs in order to provide support to youths after residential services are no longer needed.

Living Arrangement Options

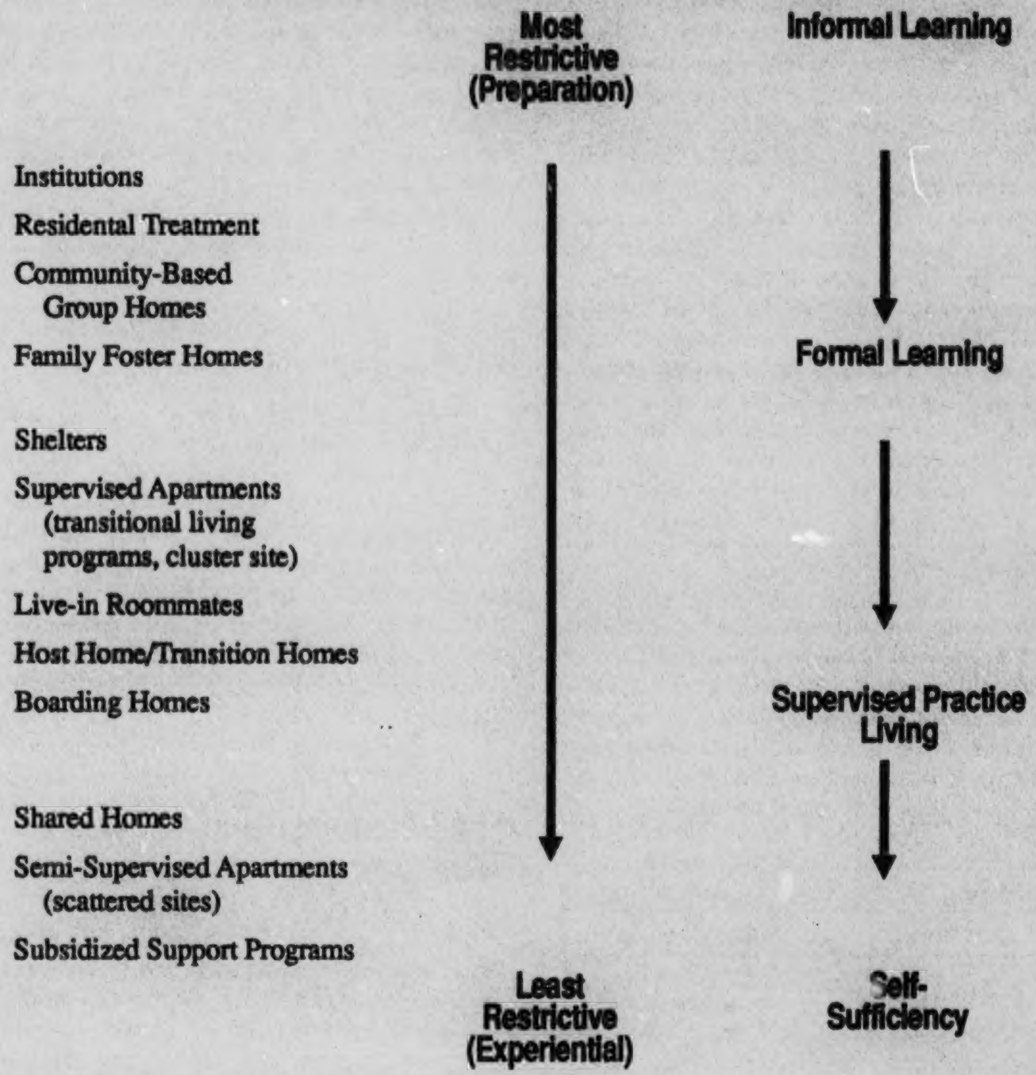
Even without a Phase V or VI, program planning needs to embody a blueprint for an expanded Phase III. There must be plans for a multiplicity of housing options for youths upon separation from state care and custody. The blueprint for action, particularly in those areas where there are shortages of affordable housing, must address the key issue of providing a wide-range of transitional living situations. Living arrangement options off the "base" established by informal and formal learning are presented in the chart shown in *Figure 2-4*, on the following page.

Program Planning: Basic Overview of Phases I, II, III, IV

How can program planning address these Phases? Phase I programs/services, for example, look at where the youth is living. In each setting, one purpose is to identify those who are interacting with the youths every day in the living space. Special training needs to be provided to these "primary caregivers" so they are better able to use daily living experiences in teaching basic skills. As a result, the primary caregiver(s) would more clearly understand that preparing youths for independence is part of the job description. They would learn how to turn a daily living situation into a learning experience, for example, in food preparation, cleaning, personal hygiene, learning to venture into the community, doing laundry in the home and at the laundromat, and so on.

As part of the Phase I start-up, it is important to address the question: At what age do programs start providing independent living services? The skills neces-

Figure 2-4
A Continuum of Living Arrangement Options


Most Restrictive (Preparation)
Informal Learning
Institutions
Residental Treatment
Community-Based Group Homes
Family Foster Homes
Formal Learning
Shelters
Supervised Apartments (transitional living programs, cluster site)
Live-in Roommates
Host Home/Transition Homes
Boarding Homes
Supervised Practice Living
Shared Homes
Semi-Supervised Apartments (scattered sites)
Subsidized Support Programs
Least Restrictive (Experiential)
Self-Sufficiency

sary to promote independence are acquired throughout a youth's development. Waiting until a youth is 16, as federal guidelines establish, is too late to begin the process of skills acquisition. Different skills need to be acquired at different ages.

Planning for an independent living program might include consideration of the younger adolescent who may be 11-15 today, but will be 16 in the very near future. Whenever this flexibility to allow participation of the younger youths occurs, a stronger program will be the result.

This is not to say that all aspects of a AILP should be provided to an 11-15 year old. Rather, those segments that can better prepare youths for the "formal" advanced levels of programming should be presented as early as possible. With this earlier preparation, agencies and programs are helping to increase the probabilities of a more successful youth transition to self-sufficiency.

> *"Nationally, approximately 31 percent of children in out-of-home care are ages 11-15, the largest proportion of foster children in any age bracket. While many of these children will return to their homes or move into other permanent homes, they will, on average, spend from 17 months to more than 2 years in out-of-home care before doing so.*
>
> *These are critical years in which children, in their own homes, develop rudimentary self-sufficiency skills, such as earning money, establishing savings accounts, selecting clothes, and learning to deal with various community institutions. Gradually, they learn to assume responsibility and to solve the personal problems of early adolescence under the general guidance of their parents, siblings, teachers, and peers.*
>
> *Children in out-of-home care, particularly if they have more than one placement, may miss continuity in many of these "growing up" experiences, and thus be unprepared for the next phases of increasing independence and autonomy.*
>
> *Responsibility for supervision is frequently left to the foster parents under the guidance of the caseworker. In agencies with well-trained foster parents and staff with limited caseloads, developmental activities for the early adolescent may occur in an appropriate fashion. However, in systems that are overloaded and responding primarily to emergencies, normal developmental issues are likely to have low priority. Youths placed in larger group care settings may not even have access to kitchen or laundry facilities, thereby losing the opportunity to acquire basic living skills—learned informally in a family environment.*
>
> *The federally funded independent living initiative provides special programs for foster children age 16 years and older. Assessment of the developmental gaps of youth in these programs may provide future guidance on specific needs which could be met in programs for younger adolescents.*
>
> *Meanwhile, there is a need to address the problem of preparing for independence at an earlier period in the lives of young people in the child welfare system."*
>
> *The Best of Daily Living, 1987-1989*, p 107

Phase II Programming

Phase II programming needs to provide additional instruction to augment the informal learning that is going on in the youth's living situation or educational setting. Many states provide these opportunities in community life skills classes held in many ways and settings. Some classes meet weekly over an 8-12 week period, while others are continuous. Other programs use such classes and a variety of add-on features, ranging from career days to week-long retreats or conferences. Learning in such programs covers a broad range—money management, buying a used car, obtaining a birth certificate, health services, housing, and other practical topics.

Phase II formal learning experiences often are taught by individuals from outside the foster care system. Trained education specialists, special education teachers, and health or community shelter workers often are hired on a full- or part-time basis to "teach" life skills. The best of these programs are those that incorporate strong experiential components. Skills training relies on minimal use of the traditional classroom and a heavy concentration of "field" activities. Youths learn living skills best by doing. Job skills are taught through visits to prospective employers—asking for an application, being interviewed, and actual work experiences. Housing skills are developed through newspaper and real estate searches and visits to prospective neighborhoods and housing units.

Phase III Programming

As independent living programs develop, Phase III components are becoming more important throughout the country. As youths become better prepared for transition to independence, they need more and better options for living situations. Originally, Phase III programs were dumping grounds for youths who had a history of failed placements. That is still the case in some areas. Prior to federal legislation (pre-1987), many states had undefined independent living placement options/regulations on the books. The common denominator was that state funds were used to support the program—and only when all else failed. The predictable consequence was an unending string of failures on the part of youths who lacked the prerequisite skills to successfully achieve self-sufficiency.

Phase III today is rapidly becoming better planned and more systematic throughout the country. The emerging theme for Phase III programming is a multiplicity of housing options for the wide-range of youths who are moving to self-sufficiency. Ideally, an agency's Phase III program will incorporate some of the following living arrangement possibilities:

- **Cluster Housing:** A range of apartments at one location.
- **Scattered Site Apartment(s):** Individual apartment(s) spread throughout a locale.
- **Boarding Home:** Room rentals in a congregate living situation.
- **Host Homes:** Situations where interested adults rent a room to a youth.
- **Short-Term Foster Home:** Home is licensed as a foster care situation for a short period of time (six months) after which the youth becomes a renter and the short-term foster parent becomes a landlord. (Closed as a foster home at end of designated period of time.)
- **Housing on the Residential Campus:** An apartment separate from the group-living situation but still on the campus/grounds of the facility.
- **Transitional Group Homes:** Transforming the traditional group home into more transitional facilities.

Nationally, there are many other living arrangements being tested in independent living programs. All of these programs enable youths to start to move out on their own before discharge from out-of-home care, thus enabling them to practice their independent living skills. In addition, many states have established programs that provide a diminishing financial transitional subsidy for youths. These payments to youths are usually matched with a budgeting scheme that creates a balance between earnings, savings, and subsidy. The subsidy is usually set up over a three- to six-month period, diminishing to a zero point at the agreed upon termination date.

Phase IV Programming

Phase IV programs are being planned and refined in many locales. With new federal legislation allowing for contact up to age 21, this Phase is fast becoming more of a reality. In some states such as Hawaii, a recent foster care study called for continued state support up to the age of 22.

Phase IV allows youths who are no longer under the care and custody of the agency to receive additional instruction and support as needed. The follow-up-after-discharge component, mentioned in Section 1, becomes a reality at this point. Youths will have more time to further redefine the relationships from Phases I and II and to create a more extensive personal support system or lifeline. Youths also will have developed a more extensive monitoring/support system as they "muddled" through Phase III living arrangements.

In this Phase, former program youths may be an untapped resource for those who will follow. Richard Barth, from the University of California at Berkeley, suggests creation of a "national former foster youth reclamation project." What better way for out-of-home-care youths to learn than from peers who are already at some level of self-sufficiency?

The need for independent living services must be addressed at both the local and state agency level in all locations. There needs to be a full range of services available so that, regardless of where youths are living, they will have access to the resources to help make the transition to independence.

Section 3:

Planning a Project Approach

The planning process is an integral part of the development of independent living programs. Many programs have neither started nor completed an initial planning project and consequently find that service delivery has been haphazard, broken, and limited. In addition, due to a multiplicity of start-up problems and the initial flow of federal funds to states (starting in 1987) many breaks occurred in the planning process for the first few years of independent living programming in the United States. Thus, even for many of those states and agencies that have operational independent living programs, the planning process has never been fully developed and neither a solid base for operations nor a blueprint for future program development exists.

Benefits of a Plan

You may be wondering, "What does a program plan do for me?" This is a sensible question deserving an answer. A plan offers some very significant benefits.

Creating Support

First, a plan favorably impresses key people. Your staff, administrators, funding sources, and youths will say, "I like a program that has been thought out!" "I see that this is a 'program' and not just a whim or an idea gone astray!" Administrators and funding sources will be more willing to put in funds—internal or external. Staff will be more willing to invest time, effort, and enthusiasm if there is a formal program. Programs should motivate, and a person with a careful plan often has a certain attraction and influence. Finally, a planned program increases the likelihood of success and continued funding, which can only help youths in out-of-home care.

Increasing Funding

Second, a plan can increase your funding. What is planned gets done—another way of saying "if you don't know where you are going, you will end up somewhere else!" So if you build a good, sensible program you have a much better chance of benefitting than without one. Franklin County, Ohio, through a thoughtful planning process has increased the availability of state and local dollars to supplement its federal allotment. This increase has been steady, over each subsequent program year from the last. (*Daily Living*, Vol. V, No. 4, Fall 1991)

Saving Time and Resources

Third, a plan saves you time, work, and stress. You will avoid wasted action, mistakes, and lost time and funds. The plan spreads and effectively delegates the workload, and it anticipates problems and turns them into advantages before they undercut you. Your stress is reduced and your program operation becomes more fun for all those involved.

Using Available Talents

Fourth, a plan applies the strength, skills, abilities, and interests of those who will be involved. Everyone and every agency and community has talents. Yet these are sometimes unrecognized, unappreciated, and underemployed, even though these very things are the activities that people enjoy doing and often will generate the most results per day or week. A good plan helps find those valuable resources and applies them in constructive ways.

Providing a Roadmap

Fifth, a plan gives you a road to run on. A truck, car, runner, or bicyclist moves better, more efficiently, more effectively, when on a solid roadbed. All can see where they are, where they are going, and the directions they want to take. A road is usually smoother than going over rough, unprepared, or uncharted land. If your route is laid out, you can concentrate on your own progress and speed and on excelling and winning rather than trying to determine how to get past every aggravating unanticipated pitfall. It is much easier dealing with anticipated barriers by planning your attacks rather than having repeated unanticipated actions blocking and delaying each move. Planning uncovers many potential roadblocks and barriers beforehand, allowing time to plan remedies.

Setting Priorities

Finally, a plan sets priorities. This can be important and mighty handy in these days of limited resources and modest budgets. Programs simply can't afford to do everything today, much less yesterday—which is often what is asked. Independent living programming is important—in fact, essential—to the well being of out-of-home-care youths. Planning assists us in realizing that not everything can be done at once. With a plan, you know what to do first and what's coming next. It not only saves you from unpleasant surprises, but lets you focus all your skill and resources on each step, so your program is more likely to succeed.

Overall, independent living programming takes an initial phase of approximately three years to develop a comprehensive approach. All too often, administrators, legislators, advocates, and staff want immediate wholesale results. This is unfortunate. If the planning process does not take place and appropriate time frames are not built in, there is much less likelihood of success.

The AILP

■ ***What is meant by an Adolescent Independent Living Program Development Plan?***

Simply put, an adolescent independent living program plan is a way to manage resources to get positive results. A good plan even helps raise resources. After all, would you lend time and effort to a program with no plan for using it or no clear reasons for asking? Or would you rather buy into a well-thought-out program that projects a future commitment to staff and clients?

A plan is a look at where you are and where you hope to go. It also is a review of what steps you need to get there. Usually these steps are in rough chronological order. Some view a plan as the program blueprint. Others call it a projection, road map, game plan, the directions to the future.

■ ***Who needs a plan?***

All agencies and programs need plans. Some are short-term, while others are long-term or strategic plans. Some are specifically focused on some type of agency action, such as capital development, future directions, specific 'new' programs, or fundraising. Others are more global. Plans are needed by all agencies in the face of diminishing resources and expanding client needs.

■ ***Why do you need these guidelines?***

You need a plan simply because no one can remember hundreds of details while busy trying to get dozens of things done. You could waste motion or make major mistakes.

You need a plan because time is one of your most valuable resources and sometimes *the* most valuable one. Scheduling with a plan that considers time can boost staff response to the new program, favorably impress funding sources, and realistically increase the possibilities of achieving goals and objectives. The development of the components of a truly comprehensive approach to independent living takes time. My advice is to use a three-year time frame for the planning process. The plan could be fully operational more quickly than that, but three years is a realistic point of reference.

Note: Having a three-year time frame does *not* mean that segments of the plan cannot be started today. Rather, it means that a program is built layer upon layer. With certain building blocks in place, the next segments of the structure will be added more easily and with more surety.

Preparing the Plan

Goals and Objectives

The first task is to set goals, emphasizing benefits to an agency and its youthful clients. Secondly, you must set very specific objectives that will assist you in achieving your goals. Goals generally mean the place you want to get to or the overall thing you want to accomplish. Objectives are those specific things you want to do to achieve the overall goal. Objectives should be stated in behavioral (measurable) terms—what actions can be performed that can be observed and measured? For example:

- **Goal:** Establishment of an adolescent independent living program (AILP) in Agency X.

A measurable objective for the above goal would be:

- **Objective 1:** Develop a specific written mission statement for the AILP by _____. (a specific date.)

Some people confuse goals and objectives with tactics or strategies. The easy way to avoid that is to always remember that goals means "where" you want to go. Objectives are measurements/milestones to assist in achieving goals. Tactics or strategies always mean "how" you plan to reach objectives which, in turn, will assist in achieving goals—in other words, your means, system, or methods.

Note: Sometimes there is a tiering of objectives and goals. This allows for an objective to be transformed into a discrete goal with its own objectives. For instance the objective stated above may become the goal of a four person committee. New objectives might be to appoint four people to the committee by a certain date, develop a first draft by a date, and a final document by another date.

Tactics or strategies for the achievement of Objective 1 might be to gather a certain number of mission statements as examples for review, revise a specific existing agency mission statement, etc.

The worksheet in Figure 3-1 can be useful in laying out goals, objectives, and tactics or strategies.

Figure 3-1
Agency Work Plan*

To more comprehensively approach the tasks involved in preparing youths for successful transition to adulthood, agencies need to develop an adolescent independent living program plan (AILP). This plan should encompass all aspects of an AILP. To start this process, a initial work plan for developing an AILP must be formulated. The following will outline the initial effort for agency X.

GOAL: To develop a mission statement that emphasizes enhancing the abilities of youths to live in a self-sufficient manner.

OBJECTIVE(S): (need to be behavioral/ measurable)

- **To form an initial AILP work group of three agency staff.**
- **To schedule three meetings for formulating an initial mission statement.**
- **To develop a specific written mission statement for the AILP.**

TASKS/STEPS/ACTIVITIES:

- **Create a memorandum to be distributed to all agency staff asking for three volunteers to meet on July 1, 14, and 21, 199_ for initial AILP planning meetings.**
- **Develop a packet of AILP materials (examples) to be distributed to the work group at the July 1, 199_ meeting.**
- **Gather examples of at least three program mission statements for work group to review at first meeting.**
- **Provide meeting space (schedule) and refreshments (purchase) for the three meetings.**

RESOURCES NEEDED:
Action Plan Steps and Time Frames:

- **Step 1. Develop memorandum and distribute to staff. (Time frame: May 1-15)**
- **Step 2. Gather AILP materials. (Time frame: April 1-30)**
- **Step 3. Gather three examples of mission statements. (Time frame: April 1-30)**
- **Step 4. Schedule meeting space and order refreshments. (Time frame: March 1-15)**

Appendix J contains a blank work plan form for future use.

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Planning Tactics

Your tactics or strategies for developing your program plan should include the following steps:

- ***Generate a Sense of Commitment***

This step starts with your own personal point of view. If you are convinced that an adolescent independent living program can pay off for the agency and the youths it serves, begin by telling others about the program, and showing them how this will make the service delivery system more valuable:

- by helping get more done in less time;
- by reducing stress and making it more "fun" to deliver program services; and
- by leading to rewards such as a more successful youth discharge.

Convince one or two and others will follow. Hold informational meetings and discuss the idea (include handouts or informational packets—see the recommendations at the end of each section of this text.). Encourage staff of other programs to consider how they might affect the new AILP.

- ***List Projects to Do, Then Set Priorities***

The easiest approach is to create a list of the program components you feel would be useful to your agency and the youths it serves. (Later Sections of this book provide many program ideas from which a list can be developed.)

Next, create a checklist in four "phases"—using Roman numerals to designate each phase. (Section 2 detailed the "phases" for adolescent independent living programming.)

To build the plan, after completing the list of components, attempt to place each in one of the four phases according to when you think it will be accomplished. After placing each in its appropriate time phase, go back and put a number in front of each item designating the order in which they need to be planned for development within the phase, using a simple, tiered numbering system—1a, 1b, 2a,b,c . . . etc. Figure 3-2 shows an example of a simple program plan.

The moment you prioritize your planned tasks, your efficiency level goes up, because you will be planning on doing first things first, and putting time and value on activities soon enough to come together at the right time in the project—the development of an adolescent independent living program.

- ***Use Time to Focus on Your Goals.***

Priorities can be set for each of your goals. This tells you what's important. Attention, time, and effort will be aimed at these top goals. They will be done first. You are managing your resources according to the goals of the project or proposed program.

Figure 3-2
Program Plan

- ***Phase I—0-6 months***

I-1a. Develop a planning committee
I-1b. Create memorandum
I-2a. Schedule meetings
I-2b. Secure space
. . .
I-10a. Choose a Life Skills Curriculum

- ***Phase II—6-12 months***

II-1a. Identify youths for skills training
II-1b. Send information and invitations to youth to attend sessions
. . .
. . .
II-9a. Identify key foster parents
. . .
. . .
II-10a. Develop incentives for youths and primary caregivers
II-10b. . . .

- ***Phase III***

III-1a. Develop Housing component
III-1b. Create Subsidy Program
III-2a. . . .

- ***Phase IV***

IV-1a. Create Post-Discharge Program
IV-1b. . . .
IV-2a. Contact former substitute care youths

- ***Use Schedules to Motivate***

Schedules have a motivating influence on most people. So, be sure that everyone on the "team" has a schedule once you have established priorities for your goals and objectives. People become a lot more enthusiastic when they see and understand the plan.

- ***Information is Power***

When others, both internally and externally, know what you want and need, they are less threatened and more responsive. *Do not* become the "new" program that no one knows anything about. Let others know who you are and what you hope to accomplish. Part of the planning process might be "dog-and-pony" shows. These are opportunities to let people know what you think the program will do and what it will not do. Set up these informal—and, later, formal—informational meetings as soon as possible.

Starting at the Beginning

One of the first tasks involved in the planning process is to seek cooperation and assistance from personnel at all levels of the agency. This will lend considerable strength to any planning effort. Without such an effort, the independent living program will continue to be viewed as "temporary," thus limiting its overall effectiveness.

My experiences over the last eight years or so, in helping both public and private agencies develop independent living programs, has shown me some of the major pitfalls in independent living program planning. First, I firmly believe that when you do a little of this homework and do it seriously, you improve your position if and when you are tested with challenges. Suddenly, big problems become little ones and your cost is far lower than the price of failure or limited programming.

Everyone has seen program ideas that have failed. Some of the most common reasons for these failures are: no plan at all; halfway commitment; overly ambitiousness or overly complex and controlling plans; isolation; and failure to provide services the client can really use. Let's look at each.

No Plan at All

This may mean either no awareness or consideration of the planning process (or the advantages to it). It also means a lack of facts, goals, and objectives. For state-level public agencies, the federal government has asked for an overall state plan for the expenditure of independent living initiative funds. In some cases, this "plan" takes the form of only one or two pages of nondescript information. States have, at times, asked their counties, purchase of services providers, and other providers for even less. I have had to request that many of my clients, both large and small, consider expanding those efforts to provide more guidelines for what they hope to accomplish through an AILP. "If you don't know where you are going you will end up somewhere else."

A Halfway Commitment

A halfway commitment can be dangerous to your program's health. Steps are taken, investing time, energy, and funds. What follows? Poor communication, with negative effects on delegation, team and agency acceptance, management support, budgets, or schedules. Often, a planner is assigned who has no credibility, stature, or clout. I often have found that the agency providing the AILP has had little contact with its internal sister divisions or departments or ancillary services providers. Many times, another agency or governmental department is serving the same client populations and little knowledge exists about each other's programming. This is unfortunate and can lead to a terminal illness for the program: isolation.

■ ***Rule A***

Make sure youth-serving programs in your own division are informed about your program plans. Foster care, licensing and recruitment, residential treatment units, campus school, and other groups who serve your clients or others who support your youthful participants (e.g., foster parents) need to know what you are planning. With information they become supporters; without it they are detractors and withholders.

■ ***Rule B***

Make sure you research other youth-serving groups within your structure and outside it who can be part of the solution to your programming needs. Corrections, Judiciary, Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Youth Bureau, campus school, other campus housing units and programs, and other child-caring agencies all need to have information and, when possible, need to meet with you to develop mutual understanding. Not only fiscal resources, but days, weeks, and even months can be lost by not knowing, or not letting others know, what you are planning to do. Duplication though necessary at times, can be wasteful and draining on available resources.

(Recently, I held a two-day seminar for administrators in North Carolina. Two large child-caring facilities from another state sent seven staff members to the program (four and three respectively). These two facilities were within 30 miles of each other and neither knew the other was contemplating such an effort. One of the best things to come out of the seminar was the development of a plan for the two agencies to work together on the establishment of AILPs on each campus and to research the other state child-caring programs for further support.)

Overly Ambitious, Complex, and Controlling Plans

Overly ambitious, overly complex, and controlling plans are almost as costly as all of the above. Remember that a written plan does not mean you are locked into one approach forever. Plans should be short, simple, understandable, practical, and workable. They should allow management to speed up or slow down or change direction and make new plans quickly as new program situations or opportunities appear. The plan is there to serve you; you are not there to serve the plan. Use it as a tool. Change it when necessary.

Impractical Goals

Another frequent error is expecting all parts of the program to work out exactly as anticipated. They seldom do. Few social programs, much less child-caring programs, come out exactly as planned. One new youth, group, or staff person, can force a program to change tactics. Accept this and work for the best plan you can nevertheless. Sometimes youths don't reach goals. Other times they exceed them. And sometimes they simply get results that are different from expectations, opening new doors and vistas. Wise administrators and staff take advantage of these. But without a plan, nothing much would have happened.

By committing to the planning process and developing a plan for future action, programs assure themselves of some success. The more clearly programs define and develop the process the more success they will have. The development of a program plan does many things for an agency and its staff, youthful clients, and funding sources—all of which, if done thoroughly and correctly, can be good.

Defining Adolescent Independent Living

Many of the recommendations in this text will assist you in the planning process. I recommend that you read the balance of the text then come back and reread or finish this chapter. This approach will help you develop a sense of what constitutes a truly comprehensive AILP.

This method also will lead you to the next basic planning step—the development of a clear definition of adolescent independent living. Defining AILP is a must. This can be done through a clearly written statement, informational meetings, and gathering of other program examples. What is important is that everyone who will become associated with the program has a definition of what AILP is all about. Many people have misconceptions about independent living. As I tell groups I work with, "if the promoters of adolescent independent living could go back 10 years to the initial formulation of the concept, it would be much more appropriate to have called it interdependent living, rather than independent living." Interdependent living more accurately describes what youths should be doing. Programs do not want youths out there alone. Rather, they want youths to be interacting with the community in appropriate interdependent ways. Thus, a definition of this concept is extremely important for youthful participants and adult supporters.

Again, reading the balance of this text should assist in development of a definition of AILP.

Needs Assessment

Finally, planning/project staff need to consider developing a needs assessment instrument (survey type tool) for all counties or youth-caring facilities within a state, youths in out-of-home care, primary caregivers, facility staff, etc. The survey assists in ascertaining the need for adolescent independent living programming among agencies, staffs, and youths. (See Appendix I for an example of a needs assessment instrument/survey.)

The first stage of the assessment is to distribute the survey to individuals involved with projected participants throughout the service delivery area. Surveys may be sent to public child welfare staff, including supervisors and administrators, licensed foster parents, purchase of services providers, referral agencies, other interested adolescent-serving professionals, and youths. A second stage might include site visits to all sites where interviews are held with youths residing in out-of-home care, purchase of service providers, family court and health department staff, child protection team members, advocacy and community-based foster care support groups, etc.

The project consists of three interactive efforts (*see Figure 3-3, on the following page*):

- Compiling data from the needs assessment study.
- Developing a basic blueprint to encourage agency changes over time.
- Orienting and training on methods to improve present adolescent independent living service delivery.

Figure 3-3

Planning a Project/Program Approach

Improving Case Management

- Research existing practices
- Research alternatives
- Develop basic recommendations
- Finalize objectives and plans
- Provide orientation and training

Improving Service Delivery

- Identify objectives
- Define standard elements
- Conduct needs assessment
- Identify community supports

Planning for the Future

- Review other reports
- Review existing state efforts
- Conduct field visits
- Meet with Central Office staff
- Meeting with community, private agencies, and youths
- Meet with field staff
- Compile and analyze data
- Develop report
- Submit final report

Major Milestones of the Planning Process/Project

As the process unfolds, a series of major milestones (tasks) guides it to completion:

- Complete research of existing agency adolescent independent living programming practices. Identify and assess alternatives used elsewhere for comparisons to present agency practices.
- Identify budgetary, supervisory, and worker objectives related to adolescent independent living service delivery standards. Define elements of those standards and determine alternative methods for their development.
- Meet with agency administrators, supervisors, line staff, purchase of service providers, community advocacy and support groups, and youths.
- Conduct orientation and training seminars for administrators, line staff, purchase of service providers, other agency personnel, and interested community representatives to enhance their understanding of adolescent independent living service delivery.
- Disseminate independent living resource materials to orientation and training seminar participants.
- Develop a needs assessment plan. Provide surveys and contact key staff and community representatives.
- Compare existing adolescent independent living service delivery practices with standards, staff opinions and suggestions. Develop alternative approaches for both immediate and long-term implementation.
- Compile needs assessment and site visit data.

The remainder of this text presents detailed information on the elements of a comprehensive adolescent independent living program—all of which provide substantive material for developing a planned approach to delivering these services.

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Section 4:

General Themes

It has been my experience that there are some general themes, or issues, that are "true" for virtually all child-caring systems, whether private or public. These general themes are an important factor in the development of a planned approach to adolescent independent living programming. They cut across inter- and intra-agency lines and are common throughout most field settings, whether rural or urban. The themes relate to the definition and understanding of adolescent preparation for independence, concerns raised by staffs, physical setting, and funding of related independent living programming services.

At first glance, several of these issues appear to rest beyond variables that relate to adolescents' independent living. Upon reflection, however, they are best understood as crucial concerns in the development of systemic support for independent living preparation. I have found that problems common to child-caring agency operations throughout the field fall into five basic categories:

- Inconsistencies of state laws and agency/departmental regulations relating to youths in out-of-home care.
- Lack of statewide coordination within and across agency/departmental lines.
- Inadequately prepared staff (at all levels) to handle tasks related to adolescent independent living.
- Limited community involvement in such programs.
- Limited community-based resources for adolescents.

This section outlines a comprehensive approach to the delivery of adolescent independent living services, embracing all program components throughout an agency. It identifies key areas of concern, provides suggestions for effective approaches, and recommends alternatives for programming at the appropriate state/ agency or local level.

Forming the context for this section are the plan criteria for developing a comprehensive program (discussed in Section 1), and the program planning continuum phases (discussed in Section 2). The remaining sections of this book will expand upon each of the general themes discussed in this section, offering the detailed explanation necessary for easier, comprehensive planning.

Overall Agency Policy

Statutory Requirements, Agency Policy and Regulations

In recent years throughout the nation, child welfare policies have concentrated on ensuring compliance with P.L. 96-272 (1980), which requires ongoing permanent placement planning for youths in out-of-home care (reasonable efforts). Major focuses of this process have been the reunification of children with their biological parents or securing adoptive placements. Adoption and reunification are not always viable alternatives for older youths in foster care. Consequently, the permanent placement planning needs of older youths who have been in care for long periods of time or who have come into care as teenagers have not been adequately addressed.

Specific agency policy that expresses the philosophy, planning procedures, and service requirements for older youths facing discharge from out-of-home care to self-sufficiency has been limited in most cases. Agency administrators, supervisors, line staff, and purchase of service providers generally do not understand the program that now exists for these youths. Confusion usually is apparent in the use of federal and state funds to support independent living initiatives and for setting future program directions. This lack of understanding leads to under-utilization of the present independent living service offerings. Further, lack of coordination with other agencies providing foster care services, both public and private, creates misunderstandings about the eligibility of certain youths for existing services. In my experience, I have found limited knowledge within agencies/departments and across divisional lines about national trends and progress in independent living programming.

These conditions limit development and expansion of independent living programming both in the public and private sectors.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following actions be considered by agencies and planners to provide a strong policy framework for independent living services.

■ *Adolescent Independent Living Policy Statement*

It is recommended that agencies consider developing an overall policy statement on independent living that incorporates the recommendations in Sections 1 and 2 on comprehensive programming and that reflects support for all branches in the provision of related services. Broadening the concept of permanency planning to incorporate independent living programming requires redefining certain service delivery components and expanding some resources, particularly to cover a whole agency. It does *not* require development of an entirely new delivery system. An effective statement will emphasize that independent living programming can be incorporated into existing case management practices.

■ *Legislative Changes*

It is recommended that agencies consider further action to ascertain the changes needed in state statutes pertaining to youths that impact upon AILP service delivery. All of the changes sought must support a comprehensive approach to independent living preparation.

An example of this type of needed change is the youthful "rite of passage" in obtaining a driver's license. I have found that the driver's license issue is often mentioned as a barrier to effective programming in needs assessment surveys and staff interviews. It also is of particular importance to potential program participants. Any alteration of state policy and procedures that would allow for expansion of the number of youths who could potentially gain their driver's licenses would be very productive. Such action would help youths' self-esteem, social relationships, and ability to develop employment and housing opportunities. This is particularly true in rural areas and areas where there are limited jobs and affordable housing, forcing youths to seek both elsewhere.

Drivers' licenses, the length of time agencies can stay involved with youths, and many other legal issues can be major program barriers. Whenever possible, and early on in the planning process, the legal issues that impede programming need to be addressed. Independent living programming for youths is relatively new and encourages "less control and restraints"—a much different approach than traditional child welfare services have allowed in the past. Consequently, a different set of legal requirements and agency regulations might be needed.

■ *Independent Living Case Plans*

It is recommended that agencies develop guidelines for independent living case plans. Appendix E contains an outline and an example case for an individual independent living plan.

Public Agencies: The outline in Appendix E adheres to federal guidelines for an acceptable plan and contains the guiding reference for each youth receiving a copy of his/her plan. (*See Appendix A, Part I ACYF-PI-01, 1-12-90, Independent Living Initiatives Program Instructions, p.7(4)(e) Assurances; each participant will be provided a written transitional independent living plan that will be based on an assessment of the youth's needs and which shall be incorporated into his/her case plan, as described in section 475(1).*)

Private Agencies: A section of the youth's case/treatment plan needs to be devoted to independent living planning for the young person. Section 10 provides an expansion of the public agency guidelines as explained above. This supplement can be used to develop a more expanded transitional plan for each youth. The expansion develops a comprehensive plan to include "after discharge" concerns for each transitioning youth.

■ *Foster Home Certification and Licensing*

There are additional agency/departmental actions that would provide support for independent living preparation. It is recommended that consideration be given to expanding a number of these areas and solidifying certain program requirements through the foster home certification process (where appropriate).

Increase Foster Parent Recruitment Activities: One of the greatest resources available to an agency can be the foster parent. Foster parents interact with youths on a daily basis and are in the best position to assess a youth's ability to live independently. With training and support, foster parents can use daily living experiences to teach the basic skills and to help youths establish a support system that will help them make it on their own.

An increase in the number of available foster parent placements will increase the number of homes that are useful for adolescents and independent living preparation. In addition, recruitment activities need a component that promotes working with adolescents for independence, and possible alternative certification/licensing of living situations. For example, a category may be added that provides a limited certification/license to house a youth for six months. After that period, the caregiver ceases to be a licensed foster parent and becomes the landlord with the youth as a renter. (This model approach has been utilized in Philadelphia's Independent Living Program.)

Improve Primary Caregivers' Training and Preparation: As part of recommended minimal pre- and in-service training requirements, certification/licensing needs to mandate primary caregiver participation. All foster parents or POS housing providers (e.g., group homes, children's centers, etc.) need to participate in agency independent living training as well as to provide those services to adolescents in their care (*see Section 9*).

Revise Licensing Requirements: In addition, licensing for alternative or transitional housing arrangements deserves consideration. Examples are scattered site apartments, host homes, transitional group homes, etc. (Appendix B contains two state examples of licensing for independent living: Delaware and Ohio.) As programming develops, use of a variety of transitional housing situations can increase. Licensing criteria for these potential living situations needs to be considered now (*see Section 14*).

■ *Eligibility of Youths*

Although present federal guidelines limit programming to youths 16 and older, agencies need to consider including younger youths in different aspects of independent living programming. As mentioned earlier, the 13-, 14-, and 15-year-old today will be tommorrow's 16-year-old. Time moves quickly (just ask any parent) and youths grow up in out-of-home care with little preparation before their sixteenth birthdays. Much can be done to prepare youths for the AILP before they reach that "magical" sixteenth year. Job training or how to obtain housing might not be taught earlier than 16, but personal hygiene, clothing and meal preparation, and consumer skills are all areas that can be explored at a earlier age.

In addition, including a wider range of ages will allow more skills training groupings to be made on developmental lines rather than the present trend of using predominantly chronological measures. A 16-year-old is not necessarily functioning on the same level as all other 16-year-old youths. Learning experiences will always be better when teaching is geared to the developmental level of the students rather than their chronological age. Thus, including younger persons can benefit older ones, and vice versa.

Including younger youths also allows less populated areas to draw from a wider pool of candidates to fill skills classes and groups. The reality is that agencies in many areas of the country, particularly those in the public sector, cover large geographic areas with few youths in out-of-home care and grouping becomes extremely difficult. This is not that all training needs to take place in group settings. But, when possible, group instruction is another teaching option that should be available.

Many private child-care and public agency programs funded with state dollars could include younger youths very easily. For those programs which are almost exclusively federally funded, however, planning to include the younger person will have more limits. An alternative is to include an examination of what might be done, which could encourage sources of referrals to supply younger youths with some skills training prior to entry into the AILP. Until it is recognized that agencies often have contact with youths long before their sixteenth birthdays, there will continue to be a loss of valuable preparation time—time that can make the difference between success and failure.

Statewide Coordination

It is not unusual to encounter multiple divisions of state government or private child-caring agencies providing the same foster care services. The need for coordination among these divisions and agencies has been a recurring theme in responses to many needs assessment surveys I have conducted nationally. During many on-site interviews with staff from both public and private child-caring agencies, family courts, and health departments, those questioned often revealed limited knowledge of similar programs in other divisions of state government or in the private sector.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to improve coordination in the delivery of these important child-care services.

- ***Policies to Coordinate Services***

It is recommended that policies be developed to coordinate services within and among systems that provide foster care in the agency's area of jurisdiction, including: the departments of health and mental health, judiciary, private child and family service agencies, etc. The common, overriding goal of each of these systems is to enable children living in out-of-home care to mature with the appropriate social skills to be able to lead responsible, self-sufficient lives as adults. Thus, coordination is mutually beneficial for agencies and youths.

As a secondary action, it may be advantageous to use some type of interdepartmental or state child-caring association coordinating body to help link all departments/agencies that provide foster care services and, therefore, independent living services. Most states have existing child-care associations that could be one vehicle to greater information dissemination and coordination.

- ***Coordinate Training***

It is recommended that a coordinated training/professional development effort be launched under the guidance of the state/agency staff development office or training, with other systems providing foster care services. All staffs, including foster parents and other primary caregivers, would benefit from joint training and inservice efforts on the theory and practice of independent living.

Preparation of Staff

Until the last several years, most staffs at all levels of agency operations have had limited information about independent living—something that is true of most social workers across the nation. This has left adolescent independent living programming as a virtual unknown entity in many child-care systems.

Independent living needs to become part of normal, everyday casework/child-care practice. Case management needs to include mandatory discussions with youths about what they plan to do when they leave out-of-home care, where they plan to live, and other pertinent independent living questions. Staff need to be able to perform basic independent living planning activities with youths and to assist primary caregivers, volunteers, mentors, and others to do the same. Ancillary units throughout agencies need to have a knowledge of independent living activities so they can support program efforts. Foster home certification and licensing units, homemakers, aides, and others must be able to work with their constituent groups to assure that independent living preparation is practiced by all who come into contact with youthful clients.

One of the underpinnings of independent living preparation is the concept of teamwork. Teamwork involving the youths, foster parents/primary caretakers, social workers, aides, and community representatives is at the very heart of successful independent living programs.

Independent living preparation cannot and should not be provided by one individual. All staff, biological family members, and community representatives can productively be involved with youths in their preparation for independent living. Sharing information and knowledge about programming and resource availability helps all those involved to be better prepared to assist youths moving toward self-sufficiency.

Clear, concise information about independent living preparation for youths needs to be disseminated on a regular basis. Properly presented, it is an issue that can claim ongoing attention both internally and externally. Features on adolescents and their needs, community support for youths, and public/private sector partnership efforts are examples of approaches that may yield good results. Interesting the local news media in AILP also can lead to a broader sharing of information. The task of finding "new" volunteers/mentors, primary caregivers, resources, and community support, can be made easier if the information about what agencies are trying to do is more widely disseminated.

Recommendations

To further strengthen the preparation of staff to engage productively in independent living programs, the following are recommended:

- ***Orientation Training Sessions***

It is recommended that a series of two- to three-hour orientation/training sessions be developed for staff, primary caregivers, purchase of service providers, community representatives, staff from other departments, and youths who will potentially participate in the program. It is suggested that these sessions be offered at convenient times and locations throughout all of the agency's branches/campuses. Initially, this can legitimately be considered a public relations campaign. Logically, it will evolve into part of an overall training plan for those involved with youths and the independent living initiative.

- ***Reference Materials***

It is recommended that packets of reference materials be developed for those key participants in the plan. General information about independent living as well as specifics about the existing agency efforts (if any) and future program design will prove valuable to this group as they sharpen skills and gain experience. Youth packets should include a booklet (to be developed) that contains the rights and responsibilities of youths within the out-of-home care system. (States such as Kansas and Kentucky presently distribute good examples of these types of packets and booklets.)

- ***Resource Library***

It is recommended that a resource lending library be established. Hard-copy texts as well as audio-visual aids can be made available to those interested in learning more about independent living programming. (*Section 5 presents detailed information on each of these recommendations.*)

Community Involvement and Community-Based Resources

When developing independent living services it is important to first develop community support for these activities. 'Community' is broadly defined to include the state agency generally responsible for out-of-home care (usually the Department of Social Services or equivalent); other public agencies (mental health, health, judiciary, employment services, etc.); agencies providing supportive services; fraternal and civic groups; church and ethnic associations; employers and providers of housing; and private industry. It is essential to develop a network of services that will support youths in their efforts to attain self-sufficiency.

Many responses to needs assessment surveys have shown an overwhelming concern about the lack of supportive community resources for youths. This is usually particularly true in more rural areas. The lack of resources coupled with poor transportation systems creates serious problems for staff and youths.

At the same time, survey responses, site visits, and community meetings usually disclose very limited community involvement in the activities of agencies. Indeed, historically, community involvement in social services programs has been limited across the nation. My experiences in agencies are not notably atypical of the national experience. Thus, I have found both public and private community resources for youths are usually largely underdeveloped throughout a particular state or geographic region.

On a more positive note, there have been changes in the support provided by the public/private sectors in this area during the last few years. Child Protection Teams, Friends of Foster Children, fraternal clubs, and child advocacy centers are recent examples of added involvement in important child welfare service issues—including independent living—nationally. Continued growth in identifying these needs, particularly for adolescents and in the more isolated areas, underscores the need for developing a comprehensive independent living program in all regions of the country.

Recommendations

To encourage added community involvement in independent living programs, the following are recommended:

- ***Volunteer Service Coordinators***

  Agency volunteer services coordinators should be designated to develop an action plan to develop support for the independent living effort. It is suggested further that, where it exists, the State Office of Volunteer Services be approached for assistance in developing a statewide plan for the development of volunteers and mentors for youth in out-of-home care (*see Section 11*).

- ***Advisory Board***

  Organization of a five- to ten-person advisory board for each agency and, where warranted, an overall state advisory group for the independent living program. These boards would provide information about and access to donations of goods and services for youths in the program. It is not recommended that these boards formulate policy but, rather, offer support to the program. Members of such boards may be drawn from prospective employers, housing providers, private industry, education, judicial, health services, and fraternal, ethnic, and philanthropic organizations, the media, and youths or former out-of-home-care residents (*see Section 6*).

- ***Resource Directory***

  It is recommended that a resource directory of community youth services be developed and made available at all agency locations. This would be a state- or area-wide directory for distribution to interested individuals, groups, organizations, and agencies throughout the agency service delivery area (*see Section 5*).

In Conclusion

As with all ideas presented in this text, some of these recommendations will need modification depending on the size and scope of the agency or program. Obviously, a small group home calls for a different response than a state department of social services or a child-caring agency with a large campus or one with multiple residential settings in one or many geographic areas. The utility of the concepts however, are appropriate for any child-caring agency large or small. An advisory board for the small group home can be as important as the development of a state panel for the mammoth state child-caring system.

The following sections expand on these ideas and concepts and offer more examples of direct actions to support the recommendations presented here.

Section 5:

Information/Public Relations Materials

There always is a need to promote programs within and outside of an agency. Promoting the adolescent independent living effort is equally important. The strategy can be simple: get the information out. Good information and the sharing of it build credibility with staff, community, and—most importantly—with youths. Developing a clear message of who you are and what you offer takes time, but the rewards are great. The planning should take place on two levels—with youths and with community. Within these levels, dissemination can be accomplished in a variety of ways.

Youth Handbook and Program Packet

Youth Handbook

Teens in many programs across the country consistently express a desire for more information on their rights and responsibilities while in out-of-home care. Some of the more articulate youths say they feel that a clearer understanding of the state system and their role while in care would contribute toward their success while in placement.

Kansas and Kentucky are among states that have created handbooks for youths in out-of-home care that include information on independent living and its relationship to the youths, community resources, and other out-of-home care issues.

> *"This handbook was written for you if you are a teen who lives in an SRS 'placement' outside of your own home. The handbook covers many issues and questions that may come up while you are in foster care. It also deals with subjects that will probably be of special interest to you, such as school, money, clothing, and preparing for your future—'Independent Living!'"*
>
> State of Kansas: *A Handbook for Teens in Foster Care*—1990

Program Entrance Packet

Many independent living programs offer youths a packet of materials upon entering the program. The materials are all related to independent living topics. The packets usually consist of a pocket folder or three-ring binder containing:

- A map of the state and county;
- A map of the public transportation system(s) and schedules;
- A listing of important agency addresses, telephone numbers, and contact person(s); and
- Other pertinent independent living program information (e.g., a program mission statement, program application, criteria for completion of program, receipt of incentives, etc.)

At times, the packet is "built" from a basic group of items into a more extensive resource. Materials are gathered from each session or module of the life skills curriculum. Youths then have a hand in its overall development and it becomes a part of the experiential learning.

Program Exit Packet

Upon completion of the independent living program and/or discharge to their own care and custody, youths need to receive a packet of important personal documents such as school records, original social security card, certified copy of birth certificate, medical records, photographs, information about their biological family and foster parents, a history of their placements, immigration papers, and other documents that might be important for the transition to adult living.

> *"As teenagers in Rhode Island, you are faced with various questions and decisions. The* **Youth Yellow Pages** *is a resource directory written especially for you. It was developed with the assistance of Youth Editors who provided insight into the variety of problems that teens face. The directory focuses on critical topics and offers accessible information and contact numbers to develop your awareness of services throughout the state. The* **Youth Yellow Pages** *will let you make choices and will give you the information and guidance you may need to reach intelligent, individual decisions.*
>
> *The directory is not just for emergencies. It also contains a lot of information which may be useful in everyday situations including where to go for help, what your rights are, and how to find support."*
>
> *Greater Rhode Island Youth Yellow Pages:*
> *A Self-Referral Directory—1988*

Again, the packet might be a product of the overall life skills curriculum or it might be a new separate packet. What is important is that it contain the most current available and needed items for the transition from care to self-sufficiency.

Adult Community AILP Information Packet

Sharing information with the community is a way to enhance both the stature and effectiveness of your program and agency and can be crucial to the program's success. For most people—citizens, voters, and officials alike—there is simply too much going on at too many levels of government to have a first-hand knowledge of what your agency does, or who your clients really are unless you inform them.

Furthermore, many people hold misconceptions about who out-of-home-care youths are. The average citizen probably identifies these youths as "bad" or "in trouble." They would typically have little understanding of why youths end up in the situations facing them and what it takes to assist in a healthful manner. Gaining the respect of key community people is the first priority, gaining the respect of as many citizens as possible is the second. An informational packet supporting and promoting the AILP can be an important ingredient.

This packet differs from the youth packet in that it provides descriptive material on independent living concepts to assist primary caregivers and community representatives (and possibly other agency staffs). It can also be developed for public relations use in the community at-large by providing information about independent living and the agency.

Many agencies, private sector child-caring agencies in particular, have brochures describing themselves and their programs. A "new" brochure on the AILP or an insert with the additional information is one good option. However, a caution is offered: try to provide a quality piece. Do *not* type a basic description and photocopy it for distribution. Choose a local or national printer, solicit their charitable support and guidance, and produce an item that lends credibility to your program. Impress your audience! (Kentucky was able to find a printer to produce approximately 70,000 copies of a high-quality youth handbook as a public service.)

Resource Center/Library

Many agencies originally struggled with a lack of curricula, text, and audio-visuals to support their skills training efforts. In addition, because AILP is a relatively "new" phenomena in child welfare services, there have been limited program examples to review. Happily, from that initial limited selection of goods and programs, time has produced an increasing number of suppliers of needed tools and case examples.

A wide range of materials has been developed and adapted to support the AILP concepts and individual program goals and objectives. This pool of materials and programs grows daily, making it a major challenge to stay on top of the growth and manage it in a manner useful to agencies and their AILPs.

To address this issue, many agencies have now created repositories for information on independent living, including texts, journal articles, curricula, and video and audio tapes. In some states it is the state independent living coordinator who houses and controls access to the materials, while in other states the materials are kept at a local community college or library or other locations where life skills classes are held. In Tennessee, the private child-caring agencies have assigned the responsibility for this resource collection to a specific individual at the state Child Care Association office.

A resource center or library can become a cornerstone for staff and youths in the development of an AILP. The utility of such an effort cannot be emphasized enough. Having the tools for staff to develop a skills curriculum, the names and addresses of other similar programs and contact persons, and resource and funding sources readily available in a central location can be a tremendous program booster.

In 1985, the South Bronx Development Organization (SBDO) created a Independent Living Skills Center to serve voluntary foster agencies throughout New York City. The Center provides access to state-of-the-art independent living skills program models, multi-media educational materials, training resources, and other youth-oriented materials. In 1989, this model was used to create a New York State Independent Living Resource Network. The Network is made up of four centers spread across New York State offering the same library and resource facilities as the original SBDO. (**Special Note:** In 1987, SBDO became known as the South Bronx Human Development Organization, Inc.)

Resource Directory

In the past, I have found that numerous respondents to my needs assessment surveys have requested a resource directory of youth services for their particular geographic area. The utility of a directory of youth services and youth-serving agencies for both youths and adults has been high in a number of existing programs. The development and regular updating of such information helps to sensitize the community to the need for youth services. In addition, the directory assists youth-serving professionals, agencies, and community groups to find and access resources that are otherwise unknown or receive limited use.

It is not unusual for my staff, after working in a specific locale for a period of time on a plan, to attend meetings with community representatives in which another "new" youth service is revealed. This new service is often unknown to many other attendees and may even have been operational for quite a while. This information is very important in the planning process alone, as well as for the utilization of the service and the availability of additional resources. The development of a directory of the available services helps circumvent the lack of communication, information sharing, and coordination that often exists in the community at-large.

A volunteer or student in placement might be assigned the task of compiling the various program descriptions, contact persons, and telephone numbers. This information can then be produced as a simple directory for general distribution. In some instances all that needs to be done is to update or expand an existing directory.

> *"This directory is primarily concerned with children's programs. . . in the Southeastern United States. . . . This has been developed to help those responsible for placing children to have a better idea of the types of services offered by a particular program."*
>
> *The Southeastern Directory*—Duke Endowment

Information Meetings

Independent living programming for adolescents is a relatively new phenomenon and, as such, is often misunderstood. My experience nationally is that a public information campaign is needed to introduce, clarify, promote, and monitor perceptions and support for independent living programming.

Significant efforts need to be made to furnish the community at-large with information on independent living. This overall community subdivides into four groups:

- State and county departments of social services (or their equivalents) staffs at all levels, including administration, line levels, foster parents, and divisions other than child welfare who, in some capacity, also serve youths.

- The greater youth-serving community, including group home staffs, shelter personnel, and judiciary, and health/mental health department staffs.
- The community, including civic associations, private industry officials, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations, and church, fraternal, cultural, and ethnic groups.
- The executive and legislative branches of government, including the mayor, city council members, town and county boards, state assembly and senate, and U.S. Congressional delegations.

One of the best ways to achieve success in informing these special interest groups is to make presentations at their regular, staff, or special meetings. Most groups welcome outside participation by speakers on special topics. Groups ranging from fraternal organizations to home builders to local high school principals' associations meet regularly—as often as weekly or monthly. Getting a spot on the agenda is often quite easy. These meetings present many opportunities to get the agency message out and receive feedback and support from some very important active and potential constituency groups.

In addition, holding open forums and community meetings on AILP also can be productive. In Oklahoma, the State Department sponsored and promoted a series of "Adolescent Independent Living Community Forums" throughout the state before activating the AILP. These meetings brought judges, lawyers, businessmen, foster parents, agency staffs, concerned citizens, and others together to discuss the AILP movement and forthcoming state program.

In Wisconsin, a series of regional meetings was held for all county Department of Social Services staffs and other state officials, most notably representatives of the Department of Public Instruction, to provide information on AILP—including a definition of what it was and was not and what the state hoped to do in the future. Following this "paving of the way," specific training was provided in the regions with nationally recognized experts on AILP. The recognition factor for AILP was considerably higher through this informational promotion approach than for programs where no preliminary groundwork is undertaken.

Recommendations

To address these vital information needs, the following are recommended:

■ *Youth Handbook and Packets*

It is recommended that a youth handbook and entrance and exit program packets be developed for participants in the independent living program. The youth handbook may be designed for all youths in foster care—not just the AILP program participants (see examples from Kentucky and Kansas). A section of the handbook might be directed specifically to those who are also participants in the independent living effort.

■ *General AILP Packet*

It is recommended that a general independent living program packet be developed explaining the overall objectives of the agency effort. It should include data and general information on independent living programs as well as the agency effort, and would be used for general distribution to interested adults in the community.

■ *Resource Center/Library*

It is recommended that a resource center/library or series of centers/libraries be established. If only one is established, it must have the capacity to loan items to anyone making a request from anywhere in the area it serves. If multiple centers are established, they could be located at each branch office or a local community colleges (as in California), schools, residential campuses, or libraries.

■ *Resource Directory*

It is recommended that a resource directory be compiled of all youth-serving agencies and resources within the geographic area served. In multiple-agency program areas, each jurisdiction might have its own section of the directory. There are excellent examples of these types of directories from many areas of the country; replication would be relatively simple. (See, Monterey County, California, Southeastern Directory, and most state child-caring associations.)

■ *"Road Show"*

It is recommended that staff develop a two- to three-hour informational "road show" that can be presented to certified and prospective foster parents, interested civic groups, church organizations, other government departments, private industry groups, etc. This presentation provides staff an opportunity to explain the department/agency's approach to independent living and disseminate the information packets (recommended above). After a program has been established, panel and individual presentations by youths involved in the program are effective alternatives.

Section 6:

Advisory Boards

Program advisory boards, or councils, have an interesting history. Many have excelled in promoting the scope and purpose of a program or agency, bringing in new resources, providing professional advice, and many other worthwhile efforts. They also have, in some instances, created more work, provided unwanted controversy, and bogged programs down with additional layers of bureaucracy. Boards are like all other components of a program effort: they take time and commitment. When this is accomplished, the results can be overwhelmingly positive.

If the use of an advisory board is to be effective for the overall program, the planning and development stage must be a systematic approach to involving community representatives and youths. Many manuals have been written on the subject of advisory boards of one sort or another and many programs and agencies have developed well-functioning advisory arms. On the other hand, few AILPs have, to date, looked at and implemented this concept in the planning process or in ongoing program operations.

There are a few assumptions about people and communities that should be raised before such an effort can occur. These assumptions, if shared and acted upon by the process planners, will lead to a highly participatory approach to program betterment. They are as follows:

- People who live in the community have a significant amount of insight, often untapped, that can be shared and integrated into a practical and workable strategy for positive program growth.
- Most people are willing—when able—to build on the strength of the community and to change realities that are harmful to youths.
- When people work together in positive ways, the AILP can grow and become a strong community resource for all youths in need.
- People with diverse perspectives who view the community from different vantage points can become valuable allies and sources of information for one another if they share a common commitment, such as an AILP.

Overall, the use of an advisory board can elevate a program to new heights. Boards can bring in new or enlightening perspectives, additional and sometimes previously unknown resources can be added, and they can empower both youths and adults, some of whom have experienced isolation and disenfranchisement prior to their board experiences.

This section describes several types of boards to consider in support of an AILP. From my perspective, all three can be useful to a program. The choice of any or all depends upon what the program hopes to accomplish. One type of board most definitely empowers youths, a second develops community support, and a third, among other things, focuses on building a stronger monetary base by expanding present limitations. This permits youths to increase funds for items that presently fall outside existing guidelines or "between the cracks."

Because different kinds of boards serve different purposes and have different impacts on independent living programs, it is important to seriously consider board development as an integral part of the AILP planning process.

Adolescent Advisory Board

Foster care youth advisory boards are being implemented in many locales nationally, with a wide range of duties and responsibilities. The boards range from being representative of a whole state (statewide) to a specific agency (agency-wide). Members are chosen based on interest and as representatives of specific areas, ages, or groups. A very effective approach is to select both youths who are presently residing in out-of-home care and those who have already exited to lives on their own.

To be effective, an advisory board needs to develop a mission or statement of purpose and to set goals for itself. This activity serves to identify needs, focus energy, and increase awareness about the board's purpose among program members, the host organization, and the community.

A number of existing boards have adopted goals reflecting a wide range of important issues. These include youth rights, fund raising, recruitment, youth leadership, peer counseling, educating the community, mentoring youths, publishing a newsletter, speaking engagements (e.g., at foster parent and staff training and conferences), providing ideas for programs, providing feedback on program and events, developing trust funds and scholarships, and planning monthly, quarterly, and/or yearly retreats.

Youth boards vary in size. They usually include from 8-15 youth members and one or two staff advisors. The Philadelphia youth board averages approximately nine members split fairly evenly between youths who are presently in foster care and those who have left care and are out on their own.

In California, the youth board effort, California Youth Connections (CYC), was launched in 1988. It functions on both local and statewide levels. The group is controlled by youths and supported by adults. A recent article on CYC states:

> *"Social workers and other adult supporters have cited numerous instances of CYC youth going beyond all expectations: CYC groups holding fundraisers for local charitable organizations; CYC members holding regular peer support groups; CYC groups applying for and receiving private non-profit organization status; CYC members expressing the desire to help make the lives of their younger foster 'brothers and sisters' better, less difficult in the maze of public child welfare...."*
>
> *Daily Living*, Spring 1990, Vol. IV, No. 2

There are at least two public agency programs, that have created "quasi" boards. Oklahoma City has a Teen Association and Fresno, California, has the "I'm Somebody Special" Teen Club. The Fresno group has, among other things, provided youths with funds from planning and carrying out car-washes, bake sales, and other fund raising events; organized events or outings that often have been closed to foster youths; provided college financial assistance through scholarships; and engaged in general socialization, citizenship, and cultural awareness activities. The Oklahoma Association was the impetus for the development of a Teen Committee, which met regularly with adult facilitators to plan events. This committee developed the rules for Teen Association activities—banning drugs, sex, fighting, and cursing. It went on to plan attendance and activities at the Oklahoma statewide teen conference, dances, donations of community resources, careers nights at colleges, and speaking engagements.

Empowering Youths

If you form a committee you must listen to its advice. Thus, mechanisms for listening and responding must be the order of the day when developing youth boards.

In a manual on developing better "Youth Participation in Adult Committees," Karen Thorp, State Coordinator for the Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, writes:

> *"Hundreds of manuals have been written on the subject of **youth participation.** Agencies exist at local, state, and federal levels of government for the sole purpose of promoting the concepts and skills involved in youth participation. Thousands of people across the country are committed to youth participation both as a philosophy and as a reality.*
>
> *"But the fact is that there are very few programs that actually provide meaningful experiences for youth in the name of youth participa-*

tion. Obviously, somewhere between the concept and the reality there are some problems. Obviously:

- *People don't really read the hundreds of manuals that discuss the details of successful youth participation programs.*
- *Youth participation does not just 'happen' when people recognize the need for it.*
- *Commitment and caring are not enough.*

"But youth participation is too important to be intimidated by a little reality... youth participation on adult committees is not only an exciting opportunity for youth to learn skills and develop self-esteem, but is also the only way that adult committees can make sound and lasting decisions on youth programs and issues."

Youths in out-of-home care have had decisions made for them over and over, starting the day they were removed from their biological families and placed in out-of-home care. Trudy Festinger's book title, *No One Ever Asked Us . . .*, is a reality for out-of-home-care youth. A reality that usually lasts from the day of placement until the day of discharge. Somewhere in between, a change has to take place. By allowing youths to ask questions, and by seriously responding, new doors are opened for all concerned. A mutual sharing of information is started, and information is power. Thus, the process of empowering begins. Many staffs have watched youths take control of their lives in AILPs through this empowering process. Youths need to be given opportunities to take positive control of their lives. When they take that opportunity the probability for successful transition to adult living will increase. (*Appendix K contains a section listing youth participation materials.*)

Recommendations

- ***Form a Youth Advisory Board***

It is recommended that agencies consider forming a state/agency-wide youth advisory board, with representatives from all locations and including youths presently in care as well as youths who are former residents in an out-of-home-care situation.

- ***Stipends for Student Participation***

Special funding should be allotted to provide a small stipend for each youth's participation on such an advisory board. It is recommended that meetings be held in a nice location, with food and beverages and two adult advisors. Monthly meetings are important to provide continuity to the activity.

- ***Newsletter***

Support should be provided to allow the board to produce a brief newsletter for distribution to all out-of-home-care youths, foster parents, and agency staff. The newsletter will help provide exposure for the group.

- ***Regular Meetings***

A top-level agency administrator should meet with the board on a quarterly basis to discuss concerns and suggestions generated by the group about the independent living program and the out-of-home-care system. Youths in out-of-home care often are left out the planning and implementation stages of programming. Encouraging regular meetings, having an administrator meet once, twice, or more each year with the group, and accepting and using youths' contributions to the decision-making process—all empower youths.

Additional Advisory Boards

In addition to empowering youths participating in independent living programs, advisory boards can contribute in a number of ways to program strength. They can be of great value in generating interest in and support for the independent living program throughout the state, in both public and private sectors. Agencies often are left short of resources to complete their overall program goals and mission. In addition, the public sector, because of recent severe fiscal restraints, has had difficulty providing comprehensive support for all program efforts. Thus, "filling in the gaps" can become a vitally important task for a program advisory board.

Such fiscal constraints are particularly true for the out-of-home-care system, where a great many gaps exist. If not addressed effectively, these gaps can become barriers, sometimes formidable ones, to program development and ongoing operations. It is therefore recommended that this issue of generating and sustaining support for the AILP be addressed with two not necessarily discrete approaches. The first is the formation of statewide and local advisory boards; the second is the development of a private foundation or non-profit support organization.

Statewide and Local Adult Community Advisory Boards

Positive linkage is an important role of these boards—linkages between the AILP and community programs, people, and resources. As an ongoing activity, members of these boards regularly survey their respective communities to determine more effective methods of promoting the concepts of independent living.

Underlying the development of this type of board is the belief that only a cooperative system of public and private services for adolescents can provide meaningful long-term assistance and support. The most effective intervention for these adolescents must include the coordination with many appropriate resources in the community.

Local and statewide advisory boards have still another critical role: to assist the agency in identifying gaps in the program support system, to generate community awareness about these needs, and to generate added resources to meet them.

A typical board may have representatives from private businesses, chambers of commerce, public schools/vocational rehabilitation, fraternal organizations, community action groups, JTPA and PIC Council, and legislators or their representatives. Such a board is not a policy arm of the agency, but advises it on future program directions and assists in influencing certain sectors of the community to be responsive to program needs.

If more than one advisory board exists for a state or agency, a mechanism is needed to permit these separate entities to share information. One method is to make sure that minutes are taken at each group's meetings. These minutes are then collated and shared agency- or statewide. Another option is to create a small advisory board newsletter. This formalizes the process somewhat, but the same communication and information sharing goals are achieved.

In addition, this level board may include some youth members as representatives of the client group. The ideal would be to have one or two Youth Board members as representatives to this body. These youth members would serve on a rotating basis so that, over time, all youths from the Youth Board would have an opportunity to participate in the adult committee work.

Recommendations

To marshal public and private resources, the following are recommended:

- ***Form Statewide Advisory Board***

Agencies should consider the formation of a statewide independent living advisory board, composed of representatives from the private sector, churches, community officials, and youths. To be most effective, the board needs to be limited in number to 5-10 members.

- ***Form Local Advisory Boards***

Where appropriate, each branch office, unit, campus, or agency location should be encouraged to form an advisory board specific to its locale, with the same type of representation as the statewide board but focusing on the office's jurisdictional area. In rural areas, regional groupings might be more effective, coordinating their efforts with those of the statewide board. This can be easily accomplished by having a representative from each region serving as a member of the statewide body. In addition, minutes taken at each meeting are shared with other boards. A newsletter can be developed to promote the sharing of information about board activities throughout the state or overall agency. (Some private child-caring agencies operations cover multiple states.)

Private Sector Boards, Foundations or Non-Profit Organizations

There are many examples of highly effective work in independent living programs by private sector organizations. One of them is described in a 1990 excerpt from *Best of Daily Living 1987-89.*

> *"The Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation was created in 1983 by a group of concerned Arizona citizens to pay for special items not covered by the state foster care program. These citizens had a special understanding of the needs of children in foster care. They were all members of the Foster Care Citizen Review Board and responsible for reviewing the case records of the 3,000 children in the Arizona Foster Care program. From their unique perspective, these review board members were able to see how many young people could benefit from seemingly small but important gifts like music lessons, bicycles, and athletic uniforms."*

The mission of this Foundation is to "offset some of (the) injustices (done to children) by doing what we can to give foster children as normal a lifestyle as possible during their time in foster care." This statement is a recognition that the state cannot—and perhaps should not—fund all of the special things children need as they grow up. The Foundation was formed to fill in the gaps.

A similar program operated as a public/private cooperation project in Oklahoma between the Department of Human Services and the Citizens Concerned for Children. It focuses exclusively on the independent living preparation of youth in out-of-home care.

> *"The roles of the primary participants involved in assisting foster children with their preparation for adult independence can be graphically illustrated as a triangle. The base, the most important segment of the triangle, is the team of the social worker and the foster parent or group home workers. These individuals have daily contact with the children and are responsible for the 'hands-on' preparation with each child. The overall success of an independent living program will, to a large degree, depend on their commitment to the program and the tools they are given to implement and maintain the program.*
>
> *"Outside professionals make up the second side of the triangle. These individuals represent the most highly trained and experienced part of the program. They provide the programs, materials, and training for social workers and foster parents, as well as providing continued support in the overall development of the program.*
>
> *"The third side of the triangle is represented by non-profit organizations. These organizations complete the program by providing special resources to the social worker/foster parent team and by providing services directly to the child.*
>
> *"In the center of the triangle is the foster child who, through the efforts of the parties represented by each side of the triangle, is being guided with love and encouragement toward responsible, productive adulthood.*
>
> *"In most areas of the country, the base and the professional side of the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) triangle are in place. In order to make the program complete, the third side must be developed."*
>
> *Daily Living*, Spring 1991, Vol. V, No. 2

Both examples speak to the need for an external group to be developed and encouraged to provide youths, staff, and the program with assistance in areas where the agency has limitations.

In many areas, such groups already exist. Fraternal clubs, Friends of Foster Children organizations (Hawaii and Wisconsin), and child advocacy centers are actively pursuing goals similar to the Arizona and Oklahoma projects. During many of my meetings with staffs around the country, community representatives of all these groups and other concerned community representatives, a strong showing of support has been expressed for the idea of adolescent independent living program efforts. Verbal commitments are often expressed to support program activities with outside funding; many such expressions have become realities for agencies and programs.

Recommendations

To provide a strong, visible, effective mechanism to support the independent living program, the following are recommended:

- ***Form a Non-Profit Organization***

Agencies should consider asking for help from the community in forming a non-profit organization or foundation to provide support for adolescents who have a goal of independent living. It is believed that an entity separate from existing non-profit groups would be most beneficial, rather than attempting to expand the service mandate of those groups to include independent living. This approach allows the independent living movement to establish its own identity among child-serving organizations.

In addition, in choosing a name for this "new" organization, the AILP is more clearly profiled. Many programs have chosen names for their programs that do not include the term independent living—such as Choices, PAL, Pathways. Whatever name is chosen could also be used for the foundation or non-profit organization to promote the identity of the AILP and its goals and objectives.

- ***Seek Endorsements***

Agencies should also seek endorsement of this new organization from the aforementioned non-profit support groups so that an atmosphere of collaboration—rather than competition—exists among groups with such similar goals. The planning process should include an assessment of the existing community organizations and the potential atmosphere for a "new" entity. Promotion of this new group should be done with as much sharing of information about its goals and objectives as possible.

- ***Develop a Three-Year Action Plan***

Agencies should develop an initial three-year action plan for this new organization and seek assistance in formation of this resource as a state- or agency-wide organization. Often programs have found a local or agency attorney who is willing to incorporate the group and provide support for the Internal Revenue Service Non-Profit Application for little or no fee. A three-year plan also parallels the AILP planning process.

Section 7:

Program Incentives

Motivation is an important key to program success for all participants. This section reviews a variety of incentives to encourage continued enthusiastic participation in independent living programs by youths, foster parents, staff, and other caregivers.

Incentives for Youth Participation

Under the best of circumstances, motivating teens to participate in a "program" is extremely difficult. Motivating youths in out-of-home care to participate in any departmental effort can be monumentally difficult at times. Consequently, considerable thought must be given to creating a program atmosphere that gets youths both involved and motivated to succeed. Programs across the country have tried a variety of approaches to deal with this issue. Many of them are enumerated below.

Youth Incentives: Monetary

There are many ways to motivate youths in independent living programs with monetary rewards. These include the following:

- **Payments for attending skills classes** or discussion groups.
- **Immediate rewards:** Payments are made at class sessions
- **Partial or delayed rewards:** Payments are made for previous week(s) or a percentage of the due amount with the balance saved for an agreed-upon future date.
- **Payments toward rent and utilities:** The program applies a subsidy for youths towards their living situation.
- **Bonus for employment:** The program gives youths additional funds if they reach a certain level of employment (either hours worked or amount earned).
- **Savings plan:** The program saves a percentage of income earned by youths and possibly matches a certain amount with program funds.
- **Allowance bonus:** This can be tied to extra chores, points earned for tasks, or as an addition to earned income from employment.
- **Youth earns whatever is "left over" from a skills exercise:** For example, youths shop for groceries with a specified budget for specific items. They may keep savings they realize (through use of coupons, purchase of generic items, etc.) from the agreed-upon budget.

- **Stipend to complete follow-up form (evaluation):** A payment is made to youths who complete follow-up evaluations of program experiences. New Jersey and Wisconsin programs use this approach.

Youth Incentives: Non-Monetary

Equally important in motivating youths in independent living programs are the many non-monetary rewards available. The following are tested programs and incentives:

- **Skills classes** and discussion groups.
- **Food:** Provide snacks, etc., at classes.
- **Films/videos:** Provide latest video rentals as a reward for completing a class.
- **Sports activities:** Provide recreational facilities, such as basketball and baseball.
- **Field trips:** Provide youths with opportunities to attend shows, concerts, the circus, etc.; or to obtain needed information/documents, such as a birth certificate or working permit/papers; or provide the use of public transportation to interview for a job.
- **Banquets:** Provide a "graduation" luncheon or dinner for youths for completing classes/programs or at teen conferences. Ideally, these meetings are set up at pleasant facilities with flowers on the tables, tablecloths, catered meals, ceremonies, and awards for participation.
- **Retreats:** Provide youths opportunities to get away to meetings and places otherwise unavailable to them before they leave out-of-home care. Examples include retreats, camps, conferences, and hotels/resorts.
- **Treasure Hunts:** Make a game of accessing the community and its available services, such as acquiring a number of needed items from a list. The program provides bus/train fare or transportation to and from sites, but youths have to problem-solve and acquire as many items as possible on their list. They are rewarded with prizes (goods and cash) for their success.
- **Wilderness/self-sufficiency/survival courses:** Either establish or purchase slots in a formal course where youths learn new skills or enhance already developed skills. Examples include: the University of Oklahoma's rope course, Connecticut's Division of Children and Youth Services Wilderness School, and Outward Bound.)
- **Volunteers/Mentors:** Develop support for youths by using volunteers. Volunteers can provide invaluable support, nurturing, and help with solving personal problems by serving as a "friend in times of need." They also may fill an important mentor role for youths, working with staff to teach such specific skills as word processing, auto repair, and carpentry, as well as general academic tutoring (*also, see Section 11*).
- **Living situation:** Provide youths with real opportunities to learn in a teaching situation. These opportunities are different than the "usual" foster family or residential care living placements in that they allow the youths to practice what they learn in skill classes or in the living situation in a more structured way. Incentives also can include allowing youths to live on their own on weekends or to move up through a level system. In the short-term, that may mean getting their own room in the group home or obtaining their own community-based apartment, which could turn into their permanent placement after the conclusion of the ILP (long-term). An example of a short-term program incentive is the Urban League of Essex County's (NJ) weekend apartment experiences. An example of a long-term incentive is the scattered site program of New Life Youth Services of Cincinnati (OH). This incentive applies both during the program and after exit.
- **Household furnishings:** Provide furniture, dishes, linens, and other household supplies.
- **Teen clubs:** In some areas, youths form clubs to raise money for recreational trips to such events as a Shriner's football game, Sertoma Club Circus, and for visits to cities, national parks, concerts, etc. Examples include Fresno's (CA) "I'm Somebody Special Teen Club" and Oklahoma City's (OK) Teen Association.
- **Graduates' reunion weekend/dinner:** This type of event brings together past program participants to share events of their lives. It has the effect of extending the program's impact beyond the youths' discharge date/completion of the ILP. The goal is to establish lifelines for youth that keep them connected with the positive influences in their past.
- **Using graduates as peer counselors:** Former ILP youths can be effective workers, usually on a part-time basis, when they enter into peer counseling relationships with currently enrolled youths.

- **Youth Advisory Board Membership:** Youths participate on a local or state/agency-wide program advisory board (*see Section 6*). Many youth become empowered by participation in the decision-making process. Having input into future program directions can be very rewarding to young people and be an incentive for further involvement.
- **Academic credit:** Some programs have established relationships with educational institutions in their area that permit program youths to earn credit for different components of the AILP program. High school credit in some instances is extended for completion of skills classes or apprenticeships or for completing community or general college classes.
- **Obtaining driver's license:** AILP participation can lead to obtaining a driver's permit, provide assistance in practice driving and driver's license test scheduling, and culminate in gaining a permanent driver's license.
- **Jobs and work experience:** Many programs have created employment opportunities for young people in the program and established services to place youths in jobs in the community.
- **Level system:** Some programs establish incentives linked to living space for the acquisition of different levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Attaining these levels can be determined through written testing and behavioral observation and assessment. Rewards may include physical movement within the home, on the residential campus, or within the community.
- **T-Shirts, paraphernalia:** Youths are given T-shirts, canvas bags, and folders embellished with logos, slogans, titles, and dates of the AILP, teen conferences, retreats, etc., as mementos of the times spent during independent skills development.
- **Gift certificates:** Provide opportunities for youths to practice purchasing foodstuffs, clothes, etc., by providing gift certificates at the conclusion of a particular skills class. As a bonus incentive, youths may be given a list of items they must purchase with the certificate, with the note that any savings above the costs of the items will be theirs to keep for personal use. Thus, if they practice careful comparison shopping, they will end up with goods and a cash bonus.
- **Bag of goodies:** Solicit community groups to provide packages of items representing community agencies and businesses, similar to the Welcome Wagon service. When youths participate in a conference or program-sponsored career day, they receive the bag of items. Typically it includes money-saving coupons, free passes, miniature replicas, writing pads, pens, pencils, etc.
- **Door prizes:** Some programs have gotten businesses to donate items for use as door prizes for youths when attending meetings, conferences, or job fairs. For example, New Jersey's DYFS got the Atlantic Record Company to donate record albums for youths attending their teen conferences.
- **Success:** By providing the opportunity to succeed, AILPs create the environment for success. When youths see that they can have some success in a program, it breeds a desire to try again. With each small success comes the development of a truly independent/self-sufficient person.
- **Youth newsletter:** Some AILPs produce an in-house newsletter for youths about the statewide effort, while others purchase the youth independent living newsletter from Northwest Media in Oregon and have a state-specific page included. As youths learn more about the program and possible options they become more interested and motivated.

- **Bonuses from local businesses:** In Honolulu (HI), the Fun Factory, a video game haven, gives out free tokens for "good grades." This is an excellent example of the constructive involvement of business in youth affairs. Other local amusement areas may give out free tokens or reduce admission costs to youths for completing certain tasks, skills classes, academic work, etc.

It takes time to motivate youths to participate in this type of program. Tangible gifts for youths are most useful in encouraging participation. As the program develops, more substantial gifts may become available, such as luggage, clothing, recreational trips, and life books.

Not all motivation comes in the form of material goods. Many youths, through the process of becoming more empowered by skill acquisition, will be rewarded with the invaluable gifts of higher self-esteem and a more positive self-image. Positive peer pressure and interaction, learning to deal with the past and present, and developing new hopes and aspirations are strong motivating factors. Each is achievable in an independent living program.

The motivators an agency chooses need to be dependent upon the agency's location and action on recommendations for change over time. Creation of advisory boards, added private sector support, and youth application and involvement in the case-planning process will all inevitably produce many different ways to motivate youths to become involved and remain involved.

Incentives for Foster Parent Participation

Many of the incentives mentioned for youths are also suitable for foster parents. Other incentives that address the state of the foster parent situation also offer possibilities for positive incentives. Increased per diem, special recognition, professional training, participation in case planning, respite care, support groups, and careful matching of children with families are a few of the critically important activities needed to motivate foster parents to remain with the system and to participate in improving it.

One of the greatest resources for a AILP can be the foster parents or other types of caregivers who provide primary care in the living situation. Much of the teaching of skills and learning by youths occurs in what has been referred to in this text as Phase I—informal setting (*see Section* 2). The primary caregivers in Phase I are constantly faced with opportunities to transfer knowledge and skills to youths. These transfer opportunities are really times for teaching—through modeling behaviors (youths observing adults), actual demonstration (showing youths how and including them in the process), and in supporting and reinforcing the skills training youths receive away from the home.

How are primary caregivers hooked into being a part of the overall AILP? One basic way is through communication. Information is power. When it is shared with foster parents, programs empower them and urge them to become more creative and committed. One of the most serious mistakes nationally is a failure to fully inform foster parents and other primary caregivers about the scope, purpose, and philosophy of the independent living program. What is the AILP trying to do, how does it intend to do it, and what support will be provided to everyone involved? Answers to these and other important questions are critical to ensure primary caregivers' commitment and involvement.

Whenever programs can provide extra funds, recognition, and professional development opportunities to primary caregivers, they help to ensure a higher level of success in programming.

Recommendations

To strengthen the foster parent and primary caregiver support network, the following are recommended:

- ***Orientation Meetings***

Orientation meetings should be held in all branches to familiarize foster parents with independent living concepts. Meetings should be scheduled to accommodate foster parents—that is, in the evening hours or on Saturdays. Other useful practices include using existing foster parent associations or newsletters, having key foster parents to host meetings in their homes, and providing babysitting services for younger children during meetings.

- ***Cash Incentives***

Offer cash incentives for program participation. Some states offer board rates for independent living. Others provide an extra sum each month for each youth in the household who participates in the independent living program. It is my experience that the independent living program can be strengthened if the agency develops a cash incentives plan for participating youths and foster parents. (Many states have historically provided a differentiated board rate for those primary caregivers who were willing to accept adolescents.)

- ***Pre-service and In-service Training***

Provide ongoing pre-service and in-service training opportunities on independent living preparation. As suggested earlier, consideration should be given to making such training mandatory(*also, see Section 9*).

- ***Foster Parents as Teachers***

Use foster parents to teach groups. There is a great range of expertise among foster parents that can be used effectively to achieve common goals. Foster parents may, for example, be used to teach food preparation, mechanical repair, sewing, and other skill areas. The more foster parents are involved, the stronger their commitment to the program. Agencies also might consider choosing individuals from the foster parent pool to be trained as foster parent trainers. The "peer" trainers could be instrumental in creating a more professional cadre of foster parents. An example is New Jersey's DYFS.

- ***Orientation Packet***

Provide an informational newsletter and orientation packet. Whenever the AILP can create a program newsletter and or information packets these should be shared with the primary caregivers (*see Section 5*).

Incentives for Residential Staff

Much of what has been said in reference to incentives for foster parents and other primary caregivers applies to residential staff. Sharing information, inclusion in programming whenever possible, and cash or in-kind incentive payments, are all methods to assist staff to become more involved and invested in the AILP. (Extra cash incentives for being the "lead" worker, or coordinating the AILP, or parts of the skills curriculum are additional incentives.)

Moving the residential staff from the often primary role of "crowd control" to one of mutual involvement with youthful residents can make a world of difference in the AILP in the residential setting. Assigning youths household chores such as cleaning, shopping, and cooking, as well as other methods of involvement in their daily activities, can provide employment opportunities for youths and relieve staff of routine chores, freeing their time and energy for more serious facility needs. Staff become more motivated to allow decision making to occur at the basic level—the resident.

Bringing all staff—child care, clerical, maintenance, grounds—into professional development training opportunities together; creating a yearly training calendar; and giving over segments of youths skills training responsibilities to staff—particularly within individual staff members areas of interest—are all incentives. Allowing staff to take youths and the classroom out into the community to the laundromat, used car lot, supermarket, or city hall "frees up" everyone's energy and revitalizes.

Recommendations

- ***Information Sharing***

The recommendations presented here are basically the same as those described for foster parents. Orientations, information sharing and packets, cash and in-kind payments, change in roles or orientation to child care work, all will assist residential staff to become more involved advocates for independent living programming.

- ***Community Involvement***

Staff also should be allowed to work more in the community to develop resources and volunteer or mentor assistance. Be creative, encourage staff to recognize needs of the home and residents and to solicit community support for resources to meet those needs. Staff need to become brokers and advocates for the agency and home. Assign staff the responsibilities for some of these activities to further encourage outside or community connections.

- ***Encourage Skill Development***

Ask for staff input as to how skills can be developed in the program setting. For example, could alarm clocks be used instead of staff for waking youths up in morning? Could youths share the responsibility for keeping track of appointments, for menu development and shopping, or for budgeting for recreational spending?

Section 8:

Staff Specialization

Many public departments of social services and private child-caring agencies have been implementing specific adolescent units in their child welfare systems. Specialization usually occurs because a group of clients is significant enough in size to warrant assigning specific staff its case management functions.

Specialization is certainly not a new concept in the field of child welfare. Workers and units with specialized caseloads have been in existence in some counties, states, and private agencies for some time. Group homes, foster care, home finding and licensing, adoption, adult services, and child protection are just a few of the areas in which child welfare staffs have specialized.

Specialization in the area of adolescents, however, is a more recent phenomena. This has occurred mainly because it is believed that adolescents in out-of-home care have unique problems best addressed by staff who have expertise in working with this age group and, as mentioned earlier, because of the sheer number of out-of-home-care youths in the adolescent age range.

Shifting Demographics

The past decade in particular, has seen an important shift in the demographics of the out-of-home care population. Over that period, this population has become older. In 1980, according to some estimates, 31 percent of the out-of-home care population was age 13 to 21. By 1984, this had risen to almost 46 percent of the estimated 275,000 youths residing in out-of-home care. Presently, the percentage in some locations is greater than 50 percent of today's estimated population of 400,000, and it is not unusual to encounter staff who have upwards of 70-80 percent of their caseloads represented by adolescents.

As noted earlier, one consequence of this shift is a movement to develop staff who can be more focused and better trained to work with this growing number of adolescents. Arizona and Ohio are two of a number of states that have experimented with this specialization. Many private residential child-caring agencies, through their intake policies, cater exclusively to this adolescent age range.

Lead Worker or Facilitator

Creating a "lead worker" or paying a "community person" to function as the specialist is an alternative to developing specialized units or a number of specially trained social workers. The lead worker is responsible for coordinating and connecting youths to independent living services. The young person remains on another worker's caseload, but the coordinator ensures that the initial referral takes place and that follow-up and actual service delivery occur. Connecticut calls these lead social workers "adolescent specialists;" in Oregon they are designated the "plan and community facilitators."

It is my judgment that either of these models, in lieu of a specialized unit, can work successfully in most agencies. This would be particularly appropriate in locations that, because of limited staff, must incorporate independent living programming as part of the "normal" case management process. All other programs could have specialized units or "lead" workers as in the models described above. For an AILP in the residential setting, the lead worker concept adds specificity to an already specialized focus.

Using a lead worker to formulate and coordinate the AILP program gives the program additional special status. In support of this idea, the State of Oregon's approach is quite functional in both public and private settings. This model employs two sets of specialists—Plan Facilitators and Community Facilitators—to connect youths to independent living services.

The ***Plan Facilitator*** focuses exclusively on working with youths on the development, implementation, and follow-up on their independent living plans. The ***Community Facilitator*** focuses on the development of a community-based independent living program. This person develops, promotes, connects, and supports community involvement and the provision of services and resources that support independent living programming (*see Appendix C*).

As a model for development in the group home or other residential facility, what occurs is that one child-care staff person coordinates or "leads" other staff to ensure that all aspects of the AILP are covered. In this way, "non-lead" staff still work with all residents on day-to-day residential living concerns but, in reference to the AILP, they focus on a specific aspect.

My work with a variety of residential facilities has shown that, by using the lead worker to coordinate and the balance of staff to support, everyone is invested in the AILP without having to "own" the whole program. A good example of a way to accomplish this is to choose a youth skills training program that allows each staff person to take responsibility for one segment or module. This leaves the other segments or modules for other staff to focus on. The lead worker's job is to ensure that all modules are covered, and to facilitate and coordinate the sharing of information, including scheduling and support for a particular staff person's responsibilities.

Recommendations

■ *Staff Specialization*

It is recommended that some type of specialization be incorporated into an agency's approach to independent living programming—perhaps a blending of concepts, with differences depending upon field settings. It is suggested that pilot projects be established to determine the most effective approach. A state or agency administrator for the independent living program would be positioned to monitor the pilot projects and evaluate feasibility for state/agency wide implementation, and possibly, to be the "overall" specialist.

■ *Specific Staff Responsibilities*

In the residential setting, it is recommended that all staff—including "off-shift" and weekend staff—have responsibility for some aspect of the AILP. And one worker should be designated the "lead" person for coordination and supportive services to the other staff as they prepare and train youths in the skills/module for which they are responsible. (**Administrative Note:** To ensure compliance among all staff, AILP activities also should be designated in job descriptions and evaluations of job performace.)

Section 9:

Overall AILP Training

Training is an integral part of the development of an AILP. This includes not just training of youths, but training of adults who interact with program participants. Social work and child-care staff, foster parents and other primary caregivers, evening and weekend shift persons, volunteers and mentors, and host-home adults are some of the individuals and groups who must be accounted for in planning the AILP training effort.

The planning approach to training can be broken into two basic groupings: staff and youths. In working with both groups, there are similarities and differences, yet as this section will detail, the differences are often minor, since the planning is for adults and soon-to-be adults.

Training is very important in the development of an AILP. The approach to adolescents in this type of program is often very different from that which agencies may have taken in the past. Less control, allowing more decisions to be made by staff and youths, creating more opportunities for ventures into the community for both social and vocational experiences—these are among the basic objectives of an AILP. And they could be at odds with past agency policies and approaches to adolescent programming.

Developing new staff and youth approaches is best done through a planned orientation and training effort. Without such an effort, each person can easily be making a personal interpretation of agency and program guideline that is not necessarily correct. Nationally, there still can be found widely differing definitions and interpretations of adolescent independent living. Some agencies still cling to the thought that an AILP is just placing an adolescent in his or her "own" apartment or living situation. This original approach has proven, in many instances, to be disastrous for all concerned—youth, staff, and agency (*see Sections 1 and 4*). Still other agencies fall somewhere between this "original" approach and what is presently accepted AILP practice.

Whether it is the youthful participant, newly hired staff member, or "oldtimer," efforts need to be put forth that ensure consistency in program approaches. Programs must come closer to agreeing on the definition and baseline approaches to the delivery of AILP services. This can only occur by providing the appropriate information about AILPs. One of the best methods of doing this is through planned youth training and staff development efforts. Developing these efforts can be enhanced by looking at some of the underlying theories of how youths and adults learn.

Experiential Learning or Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy)

As you probably know, teaching adults is different from teaching children. Many of the differences are directly related to the increased experience, maturity, and knowledge of adulthood. These are distinct advantages for training.

Research in educational psychology reveals that adults exhibit more individual differences than do children. This finding is consistent with common sense. After all, adults have had longer to be affected and changed by the variables that touch us all—genetic differences, social and interpersonal experiences, and cultural events. You may also infer from this, however, that a group of adult learners will come to sessions with wide variations of knowledge, experiences, biases, and attitudes.

Staff training deals with groups of social workers, child care staffs, foster parents, and others who vary in age, academic preparation, and years of experiences. One staff person may be newly graduated from college with very limited experience. Another may have 25 years of experience in the field but is without a high school diploma. Developmentally, these two people are focused on very different issues. Intellectually, they may function on very different levels. Emotionally, they will surely have different needs and exhibit different maturity levels.

Youth trainers encounter a person who is literally between two worlds—childhood and adulthood. Chronological age, maturity, and developmental focus and needs clash. A youth may be 17 but, because of his or her history of trauma and placement, may be functioning on a developmental level more attuned to a 14-year-old. How do you teach such a person? Are there any similarities in teaching the adult and the soon-to-be-adult?

Maybe it is possible to teach the delayed person and maybe there are similarities between the soon-to-be-adult and the adult that will make it easier. For instance, when looking at concepts in adult learning theories and techniques, there are some very effective approaches that also might be useful in preparing adolescents for independence.

Teaching Adults and Adolescents

Most adults maintain or enhance their level of intellectual functioning as they grow older. The most critical variable that seems to determine whether intelligence continues to increase is whether people are intellectually challenged. Any training session offered should be presented in a way that challenges the learner.

A distinguishing feature of adult intelligence is its practical nature. Adults typically prefer to focus their intellectual energies on solving real problems. Further, adults tend to be good problem solvers, as they are generally very good at bringing together their knowledge and their experience. So the teacher will want the use of practical skills for problem solving to be the major focus of the educational experience offered to the adult students.

In contrast, adolescents often lack the number and breadth of experiences of adults. Yet, they often are developmentally ready and willing to try out adult-like activities. In addition, they also enjoy quick, practical, and "easy" ways to get what they want in a learning experience. Thus, the use in AILP skills training sessions of certain adult learning theory practices for both adults and adolescents can make for positive experiences for teachers and participants.

Modeling

There is one important way in which adult learners are very much like children in the learning situation. That is, they remember what you do much more than they remember what you say. Your most golden thoughts on how to enhance a person's self-esteem will be lost if you belittle even one person in the training session. Your behavior, as the teacher or trainer, must support the participants as well as the learning goals of the session. Otherwise, you have diluted the content of the session, weakened your position, and diminished what you hoped the participants would take away with them.

Whether adults or adolescents are being taught, the teacher's behavior must be congruent with what the program wants modeled for the individual or group. If the teacher's behavior is inflammatory or derogatory, the message presented will be biased. Thus, the choice of who will provide orientation and training to staffs and youths is a critical factor.

Many programs have experienced situations where youths' skills training opportunities are purchased from community groups external to the AILP agency—and there is little preparation for or monitoring of those groups. After problems arose, investigations revealed that the teachers were not aware of the AILP program goals and objectives, nor did they have an understanding of the issues that out-of-home-care youths had to deal with, such as separation and loss, abuse and neglect, and court involvement. Consequently, the messages presented and behaviors modeled were found to be detrimental to the programs and its participants.

Lectures

Lectures are presented as a concept within the context of participatory exercises. Lectures are designed to present information and to open the participants to new ideas. They serve as the bridge between printed information and the experiential learning in the sessions. The most important point to consider about lectures is length. Lectures, whether to adults or youths, should be brief—no more then a few minutes at a clip. Interspersed should be audio-visuals, use of newsprint (flipcharts), overhead transparenciess, or chalkboards. Most people remember visual information better than what they hear.

Less experienced teachers of adults often make the mistake of following older models of teaching—which are based on teaching children—and of following didactic or lecture principles. Whenever possible, staff or contractors employed by the AILP agency should be have some understanding of adult learning theory.

Experiential Exercises

Experiential exercises are structured experiences intended to provoke thinking or to provide an opportunity to practice skills. The learner is engaged in an activity that is followed by a group discussion or analysis of what happened during the activity. The person learns by doing . . . and reflecting.

Experiential exercises have the flexibility to be used in groups, with individuals, or both. In an experiential exercise, the teacher's role is to facilitate, not necessarily to give out information or do the activity. You may guide and influence the participants, but each individual or group should be given autonomy in completing exercises. Treasure hunts, rewards for completing tasks, and using the community for learning are all ways to motivate the learner. For example, you might teach money management to youths by assigning them to search for an affordable used car—using classroom time, the newspaper, a trip to a used car lot, etc. Adults can give the group or individual a practical, everyday problem and ask them to generate a solution.

One important element of experiential learning is that the teacher must have a good sense of what it feels like to do the exercise. Adults who teach individuals or groups should be prepared to undertake the exercises themselves prior to asking it of their students. In addition, the prior experience will help the teacher to have a better understanding of the preparation required, to anticipate barriers or roadblocks, and to have a clearer sense of timing for the activity.

Role Plays

Role playing helps participants practice certain skills and create situations that they might encounter within a given context. Role plays can be very effective teaching tools. However, many adult participants resist involvement in role-play situations. Thus, role plays should be developed in two tracks: one for youths and one for adults.

My experience has been that adolescents are much easier to engage in role plays, so this method can be used more readily with them. Developmentally, role plays also fit better for youths. Role plays for them can be done individually or in groups. For youths, role plays should initially be humorous, progressing into more practical and realistic everyday areas. Youthful role plays often work well when the youths can simulate adult roles, such as employer/employee, sales clerk/customer.

Adults, on the other hand, dictate somewhat different approaches. Role plays with adults are usually more appropriate when they parallel "simulations" in which roles or problems are assigned. The group or individual comes up with a solution to the problem presented. Individual role plays can be assigned with adults more reluctant to do those in front of a larger group, but willing to consent in smaller dyads, triads, or tetrads.

All of the above teaching techniques are practical and easy to employ. All respond to the need to maximize participants involvement and minimize the "classroom" or didactic approach. Emphasis is on taking individuals, particularly youths, out of the classroom setting and into the community for learning purposes. With this in mind, let's look at the development of staff and youths AILP training programs.

Staff Training

Westat's 1986 national study of independent living services found that "a lack of specialized training on the part of caseworkers, program administrators, foster parents and other care providers" is a major barrier to programming. (Westat, page 5-11)

The foundation of a strong training program and a key element in its success is preparation for future needs. With the recent national trends developing in public and private agencies for coordinated training among different departments serving the same youths and increased opportunities for foster parents to receive state-of-the-art information through training, the atmosphere now exists for incorporation of independent living preparation activities in training efforts.

Part of that response needs to be development of training modules that are specific to independent living and serve the needs of the different groups who will receive training in the future. Effective preparation of staff for work in the independent living program is critical to program success. This encourages a sharp focus on the development of an adolescent independent living knowledge base, skills, and attitudes.

During the past three years, Brendan Associates has provided a core training program, "Pass It On: Helping Staff to Transmit Their Knowledge and Skills to Youth," to a large number of agencies' staffs and selected purchase of service representatives and other "guests." The program is designed to help staff learn how to better prepare young people for life on their own. The curriculum reflects a number of beliefs:

- Self-esteem effects a young person's ability to successfully make the transition to adulthood.
- Every staff person who works directly with a youth has a responsibility to help that young person prepare for independence.
- Staff professionals already possess the skills that are essential for successful independent living. They need assistance in learning how to teach these skills to the young people in their care.
- Intangible skills such as decision-making and problem-solving need to be taught to all youths.

This professional development seminar has been well-received because it presents practical information that is immediately useful. The participant's workbook provides specific activities and concrete tools that social work staff, foster parents, and child-care workers can use in their day-to-day work with young people.

It is recommended that adaptation of the "Pass It On" materials or the introduction of another similar curriculum be undertaken to provide increased opportunities for all staff to receive information on preparing youths for their transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency.

In establishing a staff training program the following topics may prove useful for developing modules on each:

- Orientation to Adolescent Independent Living
- Human Development–Adolescent Development
- Nature of Separation and Loss
- Communication Skills
- Teamwork
- Training/Group Skills
- Counseling Skills
- Independence Training as a Comprehensive Experience for Youths
- Crisis Intervention
- Interagency Relations
- Transitional Case Planning/Staffings (including Discharge Planning)
- Youth and Program Advocacy
- Development of Community Relations and Resources
- Technical Information on Job and Housing Programs
- Human Sexuality
- Ethnicity and Culture
- Independence and Teen Parents
- Assessment and Outcome Planning
- Developing Personal Support Systems
- Follow-up of After Discharge Services

Recommendations

■ *Training in AILP Concepts*

It is recommended that agencies provide training opportunities on the concepts of AILP. In addition, a refresher course needs to be developed to reinforce previous trainings and provide updates on new adolescent independent living ideas, concepts, and progressions nationally.

■ *Training Series*

It is recommended that agencies develop a training series geared to adolescent independent living, based on "Pass It On" or an equivalent program, incorporating the series into the agency's yearly staff development training calender (*see page 166*).

■ *Training Modules*

Agencies should create a series of training modules for foster parents, purchase of services providers, and other department staffs (such as health, judiciary, education, campus school, etc.). To be effective, the modules need to be short and designed specifically to meet the needs and roles of different groups. They can be offered at a central location or on-site (such as the group home or center); in a central geographic location; and at a time convenient for foster parents, off-shift staff, or others.

■ *"Daily Living"*

Each child welfare unit, field office, group home, etc., needs to receive the national quarterly newsletter *Daily Living* on a regular basis. This publication provides updated information on the latest developments in the independent living program area nationally. Access to the publication will give the independent living concept a higher profile in the work place (*see page 171*).

■ *Mandated POS Training*

Participation in training should be mandated in the contract process with all POS staff including foster parents, so that, from the outset, independent living is a part of all purchase of service out-of-home care experiences for youth. POS staffs are a critical part of the service delivery system for out-of-home-care youth. Without the mandating of training from the beginning, through the contract process, POS or child-caring agencies, foster parents, and other caregivers will not become involved in the independent living effort. All of these groups need orientation sessions and training to effectively provide AILP services.

■ *Staff Orientation*

In public systems, staffs of other state departments who provide foster care services require orientation and training, as well. In many states, the departments of mental health, human services, health, corrections; the judiciary, family courts, and a series of private agencies licensed by the state all provide foster care services. The lead AILP agency should be the provider of training or of the information needed for each group to establish "in-house" independent living staff development capabilities.

■ *AILP Orientation for Others*

The lead AILP agency should schedule independent living orientation sessions and training modules for other individuals who encounter out-of-home-care youth. These "other" persons can be a critical element in the preparation of youth. Even such seemingly disparate groups as the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), or Guardian Ad Litems (GALs), and those who are involved in the foster care review process need a basic understanding of the independent living program to promote positive future case planning.

In Maine, the State Department of Human Services staff assigned to do the foster care reviews were included in the initial AILP training sessions. The training provided these individuals with the opportunity to learn about the appropriate use of a program they could recommend for utilization as part of the foster care review process.

In Florida, Daniel Memorial Institute participates in sponsoring regular orientations/discussions of AILP at other youth serving agencies (providers) throughout the Jacksonville area.

Youth Skills Training

Many youths in out-of-home care have not had the opportunity to learn independent living skills either informally (Phase I) or formally (Phase II) (*both described in Section 2*). Public schools offer limited possibilities for youths to receive these learning experiences. This is exacerbated by major disruptions (removals from biological homes and all too common movements in placement) resulting in delays in the educational experiences of a substantial proportion of young people in out-of-home care. Further, youths often come into care from situations that are abusive, neglectful, and generally chaotic, with accompanying developmental delays. These delays occur in three major growth areas: educational, social, and emotional.

Skills training must seek to address all three of these areas of concern for youths. Youths need adequate preparation in both the "hard" or concrete skills as well as the "soft" or intangible skills. This can only be accomplished through a planned approach.

It would be of great value for agencies to establish a life skills education model to assist youths to develop and enhance the life skills necessary to become an interdependent part of the community. Essential elements in such a life skills education program include:

- Developing youths' basic knowledge of how to care for themselves in their living situation.
- Greatly enhancing the participating youths' knowledge of community systems and services, and how to access them.
- Coordinating with primary caregivers to extend the skills development process to the home environment.
- Increasing the community's awareness of these youths through active involvement in the skills education program.

A sequence of preparation might be:

- Informal training
- Formal training and practice
- Experiential practice and community living
- Support during the transition to self-sufficiency
- Follow-up after transition or discharge from out-of-home care.

All of this has to be accomplished in the face of sometimes overwhelming odds—continuing disruptions, delayed developmental and educational functioning, limited resources, and, at times, great geographic distances. Bringing youths together for life skills training can be difficult. Transportation problems, the number of youths available, time constraints, and more can be roadblocks to effectively developing and running the skills training aspects of an AILP.

How do programs deal with each of these roadblocks? Are you defeated before you have begun? Absolutely not. There are ways to overcome each of the roadblocks a program will encounter. Some methods are easier to develop and promote than others, some will take the maximum staff energy to create, and others will have obvious solutions from the beginning. Some will take short periods of time while others will take longer. What needs to be cautioned against is the failure to anticipate those roadblocks to providing quality skills training for youths.

Initially, some aspects of the AILP and skills training program will be hard to "sell" to adolescents. It takes time to return some power and interest in what the agency or system can do for youths. That is why a well-crafted planning effort and a comprehensive program are so important. The key is credibility. The first few meetings with youths, the flyer or brochure promoting the program, inclusion of youths in the planning, commitment of staff, and the development of community resources to support the skills preparation efforts are all critical pieces.

For the first skills class to just occur, much less be a success, might take Herculean efforts on the part of all involved. Convincing foster parents or other primary caregivers that their charges should participate, getting youths to commit to attend, getting meeting space, food, and other incentives are all challenging.

In the initial stages of programming, staff might have to chase down and pick up youths and cajole primary caregivers and other staff and administration. But, as the programs progresses, word-of-mouth and the initial small successes will help build support. Youths will become more willing to attend. If resistance continues, be self-reflective. Look at what you are doing and why it might not be working. ***Do not blame the youths***! Remember that these young people have been neglected, abused, exploited, thrown away—*and* they are adolescents. It will take repeated efforts to show them the AILP is a sincere effort for *them*.

The Case of the Motown Skills Program

The Motown Children's Action Group decided to hold a skills training for local out-of-home care youths. They had never done anything like this before, but had read and heard that other cities and states are trying it, and it sounds like a good idea. They asked the local Department of Social Services and Group Home to choose a group of 10 out-of-home-care residents. And the CA Group sent letters of congratulations signed by the Mayor to each youth for being selected.

However, only five youths showed up at the first skills class and they didn't seem very interested in the discussions. When the teacher finally asked specifically for an opinion from the youths, one responded weakly, "I don't know." Others giggled and made side remarks. Only one youth came to the next class, and the CA Group decided that youth skills classes were not such a good idea after all.

This scenario could be rather typical of the experience many skills classes have had with initial youth participation. It is painful for both youths and adults and it leaves a lasting memory for both groups. The conclusion is often, "It doesn't work." *Wrong!*

The conclusion should be that the program staff haven't really tried yet. What does the program need to do to get the youths hooked on this idea? What did the program staff do wrong? Are there other programs that could be contacted to learn how to do a better job? While the initial intention was good, real youth involvement comes about, particularly in the beginning, by bending over backwards to get the youths there. In addition, thoughtful planning, instructors who can connect with youths, subject matter and activities that are practical, enjoyable, and rewarding are necessary ingredients.

Success breeds success. If youths find the program useful and rewarding, the word will spread. Participation will increase and staff will want to do more. The key is to find ways to hook youths through creative skills training. For example: teach things like money management by assigning the task of buying a used car; or explore the process of getting a birth certificate using the public transportation system to get to the Bureau of Vital Statistics; or teach problem-solving skills with a "treasure hunt" (with awards for points or items gathered). Then, reward involvement with certificates for completing modules or programs, hold graduation ceremonies, banquets, retreats, and conferences. The message: provide training in a multiplicity of ways and locations; have fun by making training fun!

Recommendations

■ *Develop a Life Skills Curriculum*

It is recommended that agencies develop a life skills curriculum for youths in out-of-home care. The curriculum should:

- Have specific segments covering differing aspects of life skills education. The *Life Skills Inventory* (*Appendix G*) is one choice as a guideline for topics for development. There also are many other example documents that list the important life skills education areas.

- Be deliverable over a period of time. The program could parallel the school year or be offered for 6-8 weeks (or longer) in the fall and/or the spring. There also could be a summer component.

- ***Gather Information on Life Skills Education***

Employ a consultant, or assign a specific staff person to gather information on existing life skills education programs and development of the agencies' effort. Award a mini- or seed grant for a local branch/group home to assist in the development and field testing of a life skills curriculum (*see Section 16*).

- ***Share Information With Other AILPs***

Consult with other AILPs to see if aspects of their independent living program can be adapted to aid in fulfilling these recommendations. There presently are many AILPs operating in virtually every jurisdiction in the United States. Contacting these existing programs and ascertaining the contents of their curricula provides additional guidance.

- ***Emphasize Experiential Teaching***

Emphasize experiential teaching techniques in developing curricula. Adolescents need a "hands-on" approach to life skills education. To a large extent, classes need to incorporate community field experiences. Curricula that are chosen or developed also need to incorporate a wide-range of community representatives as teachers and community locations for learning.

As noted earlier, there are many different models that incorporate community representatives and locations. These models need to be researched and used as guides in developing an agency's independent living skills education program. Examples include Connecticut's Community Life Skills Projects and Oregon's Plan and Community Facilitators.

- ***Coordinate With Local Educational Institutions***

Planning for life skills classes and program needs should involve working relationships with local educational institutions. Many programs have worked out agreements with local high schools for space or for youths to receive credit for taking the program's skills classes—such as 1/2 or 1 elective credit for satisfactorily finishing the program. A local college, in cooperation with the high school or independently, also may grant credit for completion of a skill class. In some instances, youths receive credit for completing a skill class from both the high school and college.

- ***Include Group and Individual Work***

Both group and individual work need to be part of the life skills education program. Programs need to be accessible to adolescents from all out-of-home care locations. Branches with more rural settings will have to plan more individualized opportunities for youth. Carpooling, reimbursement for mileage, and centralized locations will be critical to program success. Curricula chosen must have the flexibility and adaptability to be useful with either the individual or group, the rural and urban setting, and the multiculturalism of out-of-home care youths.

- ***Future Planning***

Future planning for skills classes should include the capacity to work with teens in their living situation and special groups. In Section 14, there is a discussion of life skills work with youths who are living on their own or teen parents who share living and learning space. In Section 17, there is a general discussion of special groups of youths.

- ***Monetary Incentives***

Develop a stipend or cash payment plan for incentives to be paid to youths for participating in life skills training. The cash plan should include a system where youths receive a percentage for regular use but also must save a set amount for the transition period. Some programs pay the total amount at the conclusion, others give partial payments as the youth completes "modules." The recommendation here is for partial payments and mandated savings. Additional non-cash incentives can be provided in lieu of or as part of the cash payment aspect.

- ***Non-Monetary Incentives***

Provide food, videos, access to the gymnasium, field trips, and other goodies, for youths attending the skills sessions. Call it "Pizza and Life Skills," or "Videos and Life Skills." Make the program interesting so both youths and staff enjoy attending (*see Section 7*).

Section 10:

Independent Living Case Plan

Federal law sets requirements under an amended Section 475(1) of the *Social Security Act* that include the need for an independent living case plan. In order to continue to be eligible for federal financial participation under Title IV-E and Title IV-B, states must comply with the following statutory requirements:

> *Title IV-E State Plan Requirements in Section 471(a)(16) for the development of a case plan for each child receiving foster care maintenance payments under Title IV-E is affected by reference to Section 475(1). Section 475(1) has been amended to require that states include, where appropriate, a written description in the case plan of the programs and services that will help the child, age 16 or over, to prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living.*
>
> (Further details are contained in ACYF-PI-90-09, Program Instruction, 4-19-90, in Appendix D.)

To assist agency staff to meet federal requirements, Independent Living Resources, Inc., of North Carolina, developed in 1990 written guidelines for a youth case plan. (Appendix E contains a copy of the guidelines and an illustrative example.) This guide, which is used to illustrate the federal requirement, is quite limited. In its development, Independent Living Resources, Inc., sought to provide agencies with practical and easy-to-use criteria. It therefore is recommended that agencies consider the possible expansion of the youth plan guideline and more extensive training in this area in the future.

To assist with that effort, this section presents an outline of what could be considered a truly comprehensive approach to the development of a "transitional plan" for youths. The outline offers guidance for putting together a plan for each youth that addresses all aspects of the transition to self-sufficiency. From the initial out-of-home-care living situation through independence and community living, the plan should ask questions of staff and youths, set budgets, identify educational and vocational needs, and build in practice in life skills in the community for each client. (*Figure 10-1*, on the following page, illustrates the individual transitional plan.)

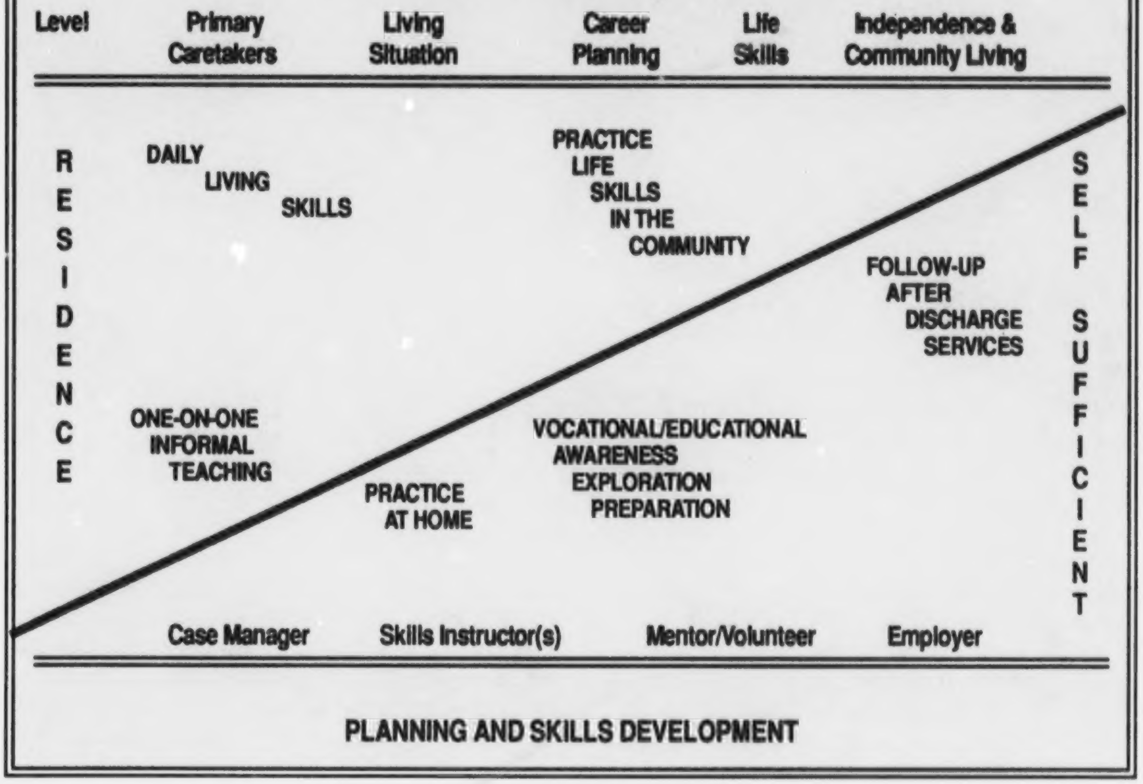
Transitional Plan Outline

The Transitional Plan Outline looks at areas of need and develops them into a plan that includes responses to each of those needs. How detailed the answers to each question are can be determined later, it is the scope of the questions as a whole that is important at this point.

Overall Need

The basic need addressed here is to develop an individual transitional plan (ITP) for youths in out-of-home

Figure 10-1
Individual Transitional Plan


Level
Primary Caretakers
Living Situation
Career Planning
Life Skills
Independence & Community Living
RESIDENCE
DAILY LIVING SKILLS
PRACTICE LIFE SKILLS IN THE COMMUNITY
SELF SUFFICIENT
FOLLOW-UP AFTER DISCHARGE SERVICES
ONE-ON-ONE INFORMAL TEACHING
VOCATIONAL/EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS EXPLORATION PREPARATION
PRACTICE AT HOME
Case Manager
Skills Instructor(s)
Mentor/Volunteer
Employer
PLANNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

care. Included are specific needs of youths and additional services to support youths before and during transition and after discharge from agency care and custody.

Goal

The goal is to develop an ITP with a specific timetable for offering life skills assessments and transitional services to youths. Strategies are undertaken to determine the following:

- The estimated date of discharge from out-of-home care. *What is the estimated date of youth/client's discharge from state/agency care and custody? What is the length of time available for AILP service delivery to the youth?* (in months).
- The youth's anticipated initial living arrangement option. *What type of living arrangement option is anticipated for the youth/client upon discharge from state/agency care and custody?*
- What is the youth's estimated budget for the first 12 months after discharge (for rent, utilities, transportation, food, clothing, recreational expenses, and health care needs)?
- What are the sources and amounts of income, goods, services, or other resources both now and post-discharge?
- What assistance is to be provided by the state/agency before, during, and after discharge?
- Does the youth have a written financial plan?
- Has youth had educational and vocational evaluations and assessments?
- Does the youth have an educational plan?
- Does the youth have a vocational/occupational plan?
- Does the youth have other sub-plans that need to be included in the ITP? (Examples: medical, dental, sibling reunification plan, etc.)
- Does the youth have official documents necessary for work and adult life?

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All of the above questions can be further detailed by developing specific outlines for the answers anticipated and expected. The plan will then include both what has occurred and what is expected to occur to elevate a youth's chances for a successful transition.

Youth Application

Additional efforts are recommended to formalize the process of establishing an independent living program and transitional case planning within an agency. As a first step, agencies should create a youth application for the adolescent independent living program.

The application should be succinct and direct, completed by the youth and bearing his or her signature. The social work principle addressed in this process is "social contracting." This practice method works extremely well with adolescents and represents adult-like behavior, which youths are anxious to emulate, at least in part. (Appendix F contains an example of a brief Youth Application for an Independent Living Program, used by hundreds of programs nationally. This model can be used as presented or modified to meet agency criteria.)

Youth Assessment

There is a growing national consensus that agencies employ one or more instruments to assist in determining the strengths and needs of youths in the adolescent independent living program. Therefore, they will need to develop their own method for assessing a youth's level of competence in independent living skills, acquire the rights to use a vendor's assessment package, or modify an existing public domain instrument.

To be useful, the instrument must reflect

- The service needs of each youth, and
- The youth's readiness (periodically applied).

Youth Assessment Instruments

Examples of such instruments are the *Life Skills Inventory* and the *Strength/Needs Assessment* (*see Appendix G*). These instruments have been used in training sessions Brendan Associates and others have provided nationally for the last six or seven years. Appendix G also includes other assessment instruments that can be incorporated into an independent living program, as well as a series of useful assessment tools for measuring a youth's level of competency in relation to life skills.

These instruments are used to record behavioral observations by line staff, primary caregivers, mentors, volunteers, and the youths themselves. Recording can be daily, weekly, monthly, or within other predetermined time frames. The main thrust is to encourage programs to monitor and evaluate youths skill development in the independent living program more closely than is possible in the normal case planning time frame of six months.

As monitoring responsibilities extend to persons beyond the child-care worker or agency social worker, greater opportunities arise for examining the progress that occurs both with the youth and with the program.

Thus, a valuable objective is to get all members of the "independent living team" involved in assessment. This "team" includes the agency social/case work or child-caring staff, the primary caregiver(s), and the youths. A community person such as a volunteer, advocate, or mentor also may be included in the process.

■ *AILP Weekly Checklist 1*

Appendix G includes two checklists. The *AILP Weekly Checklist 1* is used to determine weekly progress of youths in the program. It employs a point system to rate success of youths in keeping their living space clean, their school and work attendance, keeping scheduled appointments, meeting with advocate/mentor, and so on. A point total is kept and weekly progress is compared with previous weeks and used as a milestone for future weeks. The uses for this tool are many; among them:

- To monitor weekly progress over a period of time.
- To set expectations of minimal positive or negative scores.
- To compare youths throughout the program.

Monitoring can occur at the direct-line level (primary caregivers or social worker) as well as at supervisory or administrative reviews.

■ *AILP Weekly Checklist 2*

AILP Weekly Checklist 2 is a variation of *Checklist 1*, but there is no attempt to quantify the results. Instead this checklist is used on a weekly basis to rate success in accomplishing a specific task:

- Is the youth doing well with a task? (Excellent)
- Is a task being completed satisfactorily? or
- Is there a need for improvement?

Variations of this type of checklist exist. The main point is that this type of tool must be readily available for review. This can be accomplished by tacking it on the bedroom wall, putting it on the "family" bulletin board, taping it to the refrigerator for the week, etc. The checklist sends the message that skills development is taken seriously, monitored regularly, and viewed as part of the expected weekly household activities.

- ***Assessment for Independent Living***

The *Assessment for Independent Living* is another example of a monitoring/checklist system. There are two specific areas within this assessment instrument:

  - Level of Supervision
  - Frequency of Performance

The instrument has a wide-ranging scale for determining what level of support is needed to assist youths in accomplishing certain tasks.

- ***Adolescent's Assessment of Progress on AILP Plan***

Adolescent's Assessment of Progress on AILP Plan offers a format with which youths can monitor their own independent living plan progress. Assessments are based on their contracts with the program staff, care givers, mentors, and others. The key issue and paramount value comes from getting the youth's own determination of how he or she is doing with respect to the established plan.

- ***Janis-Field: Feelings of Inadequacy Scale and Score Sheet***

The next instrument in Appendix G is *Janis-Field: Feelings of Inadequacy Scale and Score Sheet*, which measures how youths feel about their level of interaction with others. Ideally, the Scale is administered early in the program and again at a later date to determine if there have been changes in attitudes over time. The instrument has not been standardized, so caution must be used in the interpretation of average changes. It was used successfully in Minnesota's Children's Services Division independent living projects in 1988 and 1989.

- ***Strengths/Needs Assessment***

The *Strengths/Needs Assessment* is an instrument designed to examine the total person. Directions for its use are contained in the text. Included as well is the Strengths/Needs Worksheet, with sample questions as a guide. This instrument has been used with considerable success in departments of social services, foster family care, child caring facilities, and correctional settings.

- ***Life Skills Inventory***

The *Life Skills Inventory* is a tool used to measure youths' independent living program progress and provide guidelines for skill instruction. Not only does it assist staff in recognizing the levels of difficulty within the different skills areas; but it demonstrates the instructional value of breaking required tasks into small, manageable steps.

The *Life Skills Inventory* can be administered by staff, primary caregivers, or others working on skills development with youths. Adolescents, after reviewing the scale, have made statements such as: "I didn't realize I needed to know all of this to be independent," "I am glad I know this now before I leave care," "I am excited about learning some of these things."

The *Inventory* was developed for use with refugee families relocating to the United States. It has been adapted and revised many times for use with youths in out-of-home care. Its value is as a tool to monitor the skills that a youth has learned and as a guide for staff.

Because there are so many skill areas to cover with youths on the transitional path to self-sufficiency, it is easy to overlook a skill area or miss a part of a skill area. Using the *Life Skills Inventory* as a guide helps ensure a greater degree of uniformity in what is being taught or talked about from one out-of-home care setting to another.

The *Life Skills Inventory* has considerable bulk, but it does not have to be used in its entirety nor in a single session. One topic may be selected at a time, working with youths to complete the tasks associated with that topic before moving on to another.

There are four skills levels in the *Inventory*: Minimal, Intermediate, Adequate and Exceptional, each intended to show movement or progress. The level of greatest significance is "Adequate." Youths usually will need to demonstrate Adequate competence in most skills areas to be comfortable in an independent living situation.

Scoring of the *Inventory* is based on giving youths credit in each skill area. To receive credit, they must demonstrate the skill. Thus, in fairness to youths, it is important to standardize what youths must do to demonstrate the acquisition of skills. Program staff should agree on the specifics of what young people should know and how they demonstrate their ability. When a skill is mastered, the pertinent section of the *Inventory* should be initialed and dated by the monitor.

Programs throughout the United States use the *Inventory* with success. A number have formed youth advisory groups to assist in modifying or adding sections to the instrument, which heightens a sense of ownership of the process and leads to a better fit for their specific programs.

The *Inventory* has been computerized by Daniel Memorial Institute in Jacksonville, Florida. Institute staff added sections on leisure activities and religion and created a software program that compiles overall data on a participant and provides a plan for those working with the youth to get him or her to a higher level of competence. It is recommended that agencies institute a pilot program using this software with their youths. With the development of greater computer capabilities within agencies, this software could be a timely and eminently useful tool.

Additional Data and Elements

Also of value to the program are additional contextual data. Such information includes:

- Client identification and demographic data.
- Date of entering and exiting the program.
- Date of entering and exiting out-of-home care.
- Demographics of biological family.

- ***Post-Program***

Other assessment data can be gathered after a youth leaves the agency's care and custody. (Section 15 addresses the need for a follow-up or post-discharge component for the program.) Post-program data can be gathered by several methods. A post-program evaluation can be given to the youth upon separation. The form is used to get feedback from the youths on their program experiences. A second form is available for the agency/unit/worker who referred the youth to the program (*see Appendix H*).

At some point, agencies should consider increasing their ability to follow former out-of-home-care youths for longer periods of time. Some states/localities are attempting to contact/survey youths at 30, 60, 90, 180, and 360 days post-discharge. Pennsylvania, Texas, California, New Jersey, and contract agencies have begun using management information systems (MIS) to gather data. MIS items such as use of income maintenance programs and unemployment rolls, and state employment rosters are being used to track former program participants. Additionally, monetary incentives can be tied to the evaluation to encourage youths to participate (for example, a stipend is paid for completing the form or contact).

Overall Program Evaluation

> *"If the states seek the continuance of federal funding of independent living programs, they must be able to provide comprehensive program and evaluation data."*
>
> Tatara, et. al., CWLA, 1988, pages 609-623

Whether in a public agency or private institution, program evaluation is a necessary component. Funding sources, governing boards, administrators, and youth advocates all demand some type of evaluation of a program's success in providing independent living services. Questions about the benefits, milestones, and future needs and directions of the AILP are realistic and necessary. How these and other questions are answered should be clearly laid out.

The most common program assessment instruments are designed to evaluate fiscal responsibility and program effectiveness. Federal legislation requires maintaining complete accounts of independent living program activities, for each program year, to demonstrate achievement. (*Section 477 SSA—PL 99-272, IV-E ILP-I*)

Gathering and maintaining relevant data in an effective way requires agencies to have or gain the capability for aggregate program and client outcome data analysis.

Aggregate program data analysis is defined as a set of technical activities (e.g., data collection, analysis) designed to assess the overall results of independent living program efforts using aggregate statistical data.

Client outcome data refers to a series of technical activities measuring the effect of program efforts on program youths, by using client outcome information. There are needs for these types of technical capabilities beyond the basic federal reporting requirements or reporting needs of the contracting agency.

"Have youth improved after receiving services?" This is a vital question for all independent living program administrators. Client outcome monitoring offers a clear focus on the youths served in the program.

"Are we doing enough?" "Are we taking correct actions?" "Do we need to alter present strategies?" At present, most programs/agencies receive little or no information in response to these vital questions. It is important to consider seriously providing independent living program services and imperative that administrators be able to obtain information that helps to improve client outcomes and maximize the effectiveness of agency dollars.

The National Independent Living Association (NILA) has been working on the developments of program evaluations nationally. Through a committee made up of public and private agency members, NILA has been surveying programs and states to obtain existing state-of-the-art program evaluation. In addition, WESTAT of Rockville, Maryland has been under contract to the federal government to evaluate the latest program efforts nationally. Both of these groups should have data available for dissemination sometime in 1992.

The best evaluations are those where the program gathers information and an external source evaluates and adds to it. I have tried to encourage agencies to use a consultant who is well-versed in AILP requirements and who is willing to provide on-site evaluation visits. A simple evaluation model can be drawn up and implemented over a reasonable period of time (*see Appendix K*).

Section 11:

Volunteers/Mentors

As they head down the path to independence and self-sufficiency, youths need mature individuals to provide links to the community and to serve as responsible role models or mentors. These persons serve as confidants, teachers, friends, and much needed resources during a crucial period of time.

Many of the young people leaving foster care do not have family or friends to help them make the transition to independent living. These young people have to create their own support systems and, very quickly, to learn to rely on themselves.

For some young people, moving out means returning to a community, neighborhood, or part of the state where they have not lived for a long time. Living away from home puts them out of touch with jobs, friends, and resources. Re-establishing themselves as adults in their home community takes time and patience.

For other young people who have been in foster care, independence means moving to communities where they have no family or friends to take a job or start a training program. Moves like this are always difficult, and even more so when there is no one from home who can help financially or emotionally. Volunteers can assist in filling this void.

Mentors and volunteers also can be used to assist youths in their goal planning. These "team planning" efforts can become important aspects of youths' transitional plan development. If these adults are trusted and respected, their contributions can be invaluable to youths.

The volunteer/mentor has a complex role in helping an adolescent move toward independence. This adult is usually an older, more experienced, wiser person who is willing to advise and encourage a younger one. Webster's dictionary defines a mentor as a "trusted counselor or guide, tutor, or coach." Listening, coaching, educating, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, being a role model are all mentor functions. A volunteer is defined as "a person who of his or her own free will offers him or herself for a service or duty." All of the mentor duties are as applicable to volunteers and you will often see the terms used interchangeably.

However, for the purposes of this text, I prefer to separate the volunteer role from that of the mentor for independent living programming. In this text, a mentor is a teacher, focusing primarily on assisting a youth to learn a skill or acquire specific information about a subject. A volunteer can also be a teacher, but is more likely to serve as social confidant and companion or community advisor.

One reason these two seemingly similar terms are used in distinctly different ways is to encourage the development of an expanded volunteer program component. The more adult positive role models that youths interact with, the more opportunities they have to develop a broader Personal Support System (PSS). This PSS is what helps youths survive the transition to adulthood. In fact, each person's PSS is often referred to as the "natural mental health system" that an individual depends on for assistance in handling life's transitions in a healthy manner.

By distinguishing between the two different roles of volunteers—community advisors and teachers (mentors)—programs accomplish two important objectives:

- Youths are exposed to two different kinds of adult helpers; and
- Volunteers' long-term involvement is encouraged because their roles are specifically and clearly delineated.

Thus, the mentor is someone who "teaches" specific tasks and whose role is confined to just that task. Volunteer community advisors offer a broader range of support to youths. For example, Mrs. Prather—a mentor—teaches Armando word processing twice a week for an hour each time. While Anne Smith—a volunteer community advisor—is available to Susie, by phone or in person, to discuss personal issues, brainstorm solutions to problems, or have lunch or go to a movie.

Not only are clear roles useful for youths, but for the adult volunteers, the careful delineation and limiting of volunteer roles minimizes the possibility of their being burned out by often very needy and demanding youths. Furthermore, exposing youths to more than one adult role model naturally increases their PSS. Finally, a component is added to the agency program that is relatively low-cost and abundantly available.

Recommendations

To use volunteers/mentors more effectively in the AILP, the following are recommended:

- ***Use AILP Volunteers***

It is recommended that agencies explore the possibility of expanding the role of existing volunteer coordinators to include activities supporting the independent living effort. Many agencies have existing volunteer offices or coordinators. These offices, particularly in the public agencies, usually do not focus on child welfare programs. Expanding them to include the AILP could provide the impetus for developing new and very useful resources.

- ***Work With State Volunteer Office***

Efforts should be made to use and coordinate with the resources of the existing state office(s) on volunteer services. States such as New York use their state office of volunteer services as a resource and promoter of adolescent independent living services.

> *"The New York State Department of Social Services, in cooperation with the Governor's Office for Voluntary Services and two local Volunteer Centers, is implementing a volunteer involvement project in a foster care agency and a local social services department. Over 50 volunteers have been involved in teaching 75 foster care youths independent living skills, and conducting career, education, and housing explorations."*
>
> North, Mallabar, Desrochers, CWLA 1988

- ***Develop Volunteer Component***

It is recommended that agencies undertake the development of a volunteer component to assist the AILP in its delivery of services to youths. The Nebraska Department of Social Services created *The Volunteer Mentor Training Program* to:

> *". . . give young adults exiting foster care a link to the 'real world' they are preparing to enter. This fully tested, interdependence program matches each youth with a role model who is not 'a part of the system.' Through this training, a team of valuable and sustaining support is created for the emerging young adult. The volunteer mentor, case worker, and foster care provider work together to make the transition to independence a positive and successful experience."*

This program and others like it are paving the way for youths to increase their personal support systems by including positive adult role models and at the same time expand resources for the program and agency.

- ***Two Types of Volunteers***

Agencies should develop a two-pronged approach to the development or refinement of existing programming. Basically, this means distinguishing two types of volunteers: community advisors and mentors. As mentioned earlier, expanding the positive role-model contacts youths have with adults from the community is critical. The most healthy, well-adjusted individual, when leaving home, needs a lifeline for survival. Development of these contacts can be the lifeline to which youths will cling for survival while on their own.

Section 12:

Teen Conferences

Living in a out-of-home care situation can be very traumatic for a young person. Feelings of inadequacy, blame, frustration, and isolation are common. Youths often have difficulty talking about their feelings and situation, much less finding someone to trust with this information. In many instances, youths are physically as well as psychologically isolated. This isolation becomes a major barrier to their normal development. Many youths do not know who the other "foster or group home kids" are and, even when they do, rarely have opportunities to talk to each other about what it is like to be in these situations.

In the mid-1980s, the South Carolina Department of Social Services was having difficulty motivating teens to take an interest in planning their future. They decided to experiment with the idea of holding yearly teen conferences. Initially focused on bringing youths together to deal with independent living issues, the conferences were of considerable success.

Subsequently, many other states and programs adopted the idea of teen conferences. In 1990 alone, over 25 states offered teen conferences for out-of-home-care youth. With few exceptions, the conferences proved to be an excellent way to get teens (and agency staff) excited about preparing for independence.

The basic concept of teen conferences is to bring together youths from the out-of-home-care system to discuss their future plans. At the same time programs can be offered to provide youths with some very useful information, a place to discuss the central issues of what it is like to be a "foster care youth," to give feedback to the agency, and to have some much needed fun.

> *"When the concept of independent living preparation was first presented to staffs that I have worked with in the last six to seven years, it often met with a mixture of enthusiasm and skepticism. While most agreed that youth in out-of-home care needed help in preparing for emancipation, it often was felt that staff didn't have enough time or resources to provide the needed services. Those agencies that had attempted to offer these services also reported that initially it was difficult to get teens and staffs interested and motivated to participate in independent living preparation activities."*
>
> *Best of Daily Living—*
> Teen Conference's on Independence—1989

In this context, I have encouraged programs to accept the challenge of developing an independent living activity that would be interesting to teens and staffs and that required a modest expenditure of agency time and resources. The activity that evolved is similar to the South Carolina experience—it is a one-day, weekend, or week-long retreat or conference for teens.

Instead of focusing solely on the foster care system, conference time is used to teach living skills such as finding jobs, managing money, getting along with people, making decisions, and planning for the future. Youths are given ample time to discuss what it is like to plan for the future, what it will take to survive, and how the system and they can provide what is needed.

Programs have scheduled variations, ranging from one statewide conference to multiple gatherings regionally or county-wide, meeting one to three times a year. There are "theme" conferences (e.g., careers, college planning), as well as just "fun" days or weekend retreats. One group in California, for example, held a weekend simulation of the "real" world. Other agencies hold small repeated or regional conferences so that the multiple offerings create the opportunity for more out-of-home-care youths to participate in the experience.

Although there is perhaps primary concern for youths who have been in the system for a long time, conference attendance should be an option for any youth in out-of-home care who is able to care for himself or herself for the day, weekend, or week, and is who not self-destructive or violent.

The following are some basic criteria for the development of a teen conference. In addition, there is a booklet on teen conferences by Independent Living Resources, Inc., (*see Appendix K*), which lays out the complete planning approach for agencies to develop teen conferences of their own.

(**Special Note:** An agency does not have to develop a teen conference on its own. In fact, it is much better to "pull together" and pool talents to increase the number of potential attendees (both staff and youths); the availability of resources; and the general diversity of youths. A program sponsored by the state social service department, group, or residential child care association could be the better approach in some situations.)

Conference Staffing

In developing a teen conference, staffing is a critical issue. Often, regular staff are already overwhelmed by their present job related tasks. How do you free up additional time to allow for the planning and actual implementation of the activities needed to do a conference? There are a few ways to overcome this very critical challenge.

If, as suggested earlier, you are pooling resources with other agencies, or even if you are going it alone, it is a good idea to try to draw at least a skeleton staff from among your employees. The time they have available should be during their regular working hours. Even though this is difficult, you do need someone from the regular staff to be the vanguard for planning this event.

(**Special Note:** I have found that this "assignment" often becomes a very enjoyable one for staff. The activities of planning meetings, site selection, soliciting community resources, and the like are rewarding and different than the normal routines most staff are engaged in on a daily basis. Many staff sign on for additional time and conferences and even extend their time voluntarily.)

Building a Staff

Beyond regular staff, agencies should include a community person—possibly from the AILP advisory board (*see Section 6*)—and youths to help coordinate the event. The youths might also come from the youth advisory board, or they may simply be selected from the general out-of-home-care population. The ideal is to find an adult who was a former out-of-home-care youth and who is willing to participate.

As the planning moves forward, consider expanding staff for the event so as to include a wide range of volunteers. Volunteers can be a vital part of the success of teen conferences—functioning as small-group facilitators, activity coordinators, or night supervisors.

- ***Small-Group Facilitators***

The small-group facilitators play an important role since much of the planned discussion and instruction can occur within the small-group sessions that are planned as part of the conference. (Obviously, the longer the conference, the more small sessions there can be.)

It's a good idea to pair group facilitators and assign them to groups of no more than eight or nine youths. Clear, concise guidelines must be drawn up for facilitators providing detailed information on how to conduct small-group activities. And, it is important to plan a one-day training/orientation session prior to the conference for group facilitators.

- ***Activity Coordinator and Night Supervisors***

The activity coordinator and night supervisors are responsible for all activities that occur outside of the small groups. Their jobs entail organizing the numerous recreational and social activities and making sure that young ladies and gentlemen retire to the appropriate sleeping quarters for the night and remain there. Needless to say, these volunteers will not get a lot of sleep during the conference.

Recruiting

Volunteer recruitment is not difficult. About half the needed number often come from agency staff. The balance of the volunteers are usually friends and relatives of staff members and other volunteers or students. Most volunteers leave the conference feeling really good about their contributions and about the young people they spent time with.

It is not unusual for several volunteers to sign up for future conferences, particularly if they become annual events. Usually by the end of the conference, one hears comments like, "I had no idea that a weekend with 40 teen-age people could be so much fun." "I learned a lot about working with groups," or "I'm ready to start groups like this in my agency or with youth I work with." (*Best of Daily Living—1987-89*)

> *"In April of 1986, my wife and I volunteered to serve as facilitators for an independent living skills teen conference held near Fort Royal, Virginia. I say I 'volunteered,' with some hesitation. Though I should acknowledge up front that my wife was the real volunteer in this case; I sort of 'accompanied' her on this fabulous 'get-away weekend . . .'*
>
> *"I can't adequately recount all of the issues that we dealt with during the conference or what specific reactions and questions the group had about each. I can't even share, as I'd like to, the great satisfaction I got from being able to help even one of these youth feel just a little more confident about his or her ability to 'make it' after being discharged from care. I can only encourage other 'bystanders' like myself—folks who don't think they have much to offer as an ILS volunteer—to check it out. You might be surprised at how much you know and how much you have to share."*
>
> "Volunteer—It's Worth it!"
> *Best of Daily Living—1987-89*

Conference Design

In planning the conference, make every effort to present it as an attractive event to the young people. A conference brochure is useful to describe the event and its special site.

Size and Location

Campus settings or a nice retreat area or hotel may prove to be a special enticement for attendees. (Telephone and in-room movies *can* be controlled!)

The ideal conference will bring together between 40-60 youths at a maximum. If there is a need to have a larger group, it may be wise to reduce the time together to a single day. (Connecticut has held a large one-day conference for the last few years with much success.) Other options include holding a series of conferences—one in each region; combining a few regions; or having two or three statewide meetings.

Sites for these gatherings should be places that youths would want to go to and will enjoy while attending. College campuses, campgrounds, 4-H retreat centers, wilderness areas, and resorts are just a few examples of sites that could be used. The site should be recreational and informative at the same time. Such locations, if chosen carefully and scheduled correctly, often can be reserved for little or no cost to the agency. My experience has been that the owners of these facilities are often "philanthropic" and more than willing to assist in underwriting expenses.

Conference Structure

A good balance between small-group discussion and recreational activities is important. In spite of the natural tendency to pack as much instruction into the conference as possible, teens and adults can only tolerate so much time in group sessions.

Both the teens and the volunteers need some less-structured time to relax and get to know each other. Teens often use this time to seek out a volunteer or guest speaker or to make friends with other conference participants. The friendships that are made during the time together are as important as the conference subject matter.

A Winning Idea

Teen conferences demonstrate to many individuals that helping teens prepare for life on their own can be a pleasant and rewarding experience. The conferences also show that people outside of the social service profession can contribute and should be involved in this helping experience. I have found that the youths and adults who participate in such conferences leave them motivated to continue their preparations for the future.

In discussions with community representatives and agency staff during different projects nationally, I have found a high degree of interest in the teen conference concept. This could be an excellent way to "kick-off" an agency effort as well as to give ongoing impetus to program participants or to conclude a program year.

Recommendations

To build a teen conference as a centerpiece in an agency's independent living program, the following are recommended:

- ***Plan Teen Conference(s)***

Agencies should plan and carry out teen conference(s) for youths in out-of-home care. Community support for food, lodging, transportation, and "goodies" (i.e., tangible goods the young people can be given to take home with them at the conclusion of the conference) can be solicited from public and private sources. To serve youths well, the conference needs a broad base of community interest and involvement to generate benefits that will carry well beyond the actual conference time together.

- ***Grant Funding***

It is recommended that agencies award a mini- or seed grant (*see Section 16*) to a program or a few staff members to pilot the concept. (Look for staff who express interest in the teen conference idea.) Particularly in large agencies/systems, piloting this concept on a smaller scale or region allows the "bugs" to be worked out and everyone to test the idea. Replication then becomes more manageable and measurable.

- ***Use Planning Guide***

It is recommended that agencies make use of the *Teen Conference Planners Guide* from Independent Living Resources, Inc. (*see Appendix K*). This text is the only one of its kind and can prove to be very useful in putting together the teen conference.

Section 13:

Jobs/Vocational Program

> *Finding jobs is a major challenge that faces all young adults. For those about to leave foster care, sound preparation to make employment decisions is even more critical. Preparing youths to work, therefore, must be a primary treatment concern for foster care programs serving older adolescents."*
>
> North, Mallabar, and Desrochers, CWLA, 1988

The world of work can be a principal source of independent living skills development, through interaction with other employees, maintaining relationships with employers, and managing finances. Many people believe the first step in preparing for a job search is to develop a resume and complete application forms. If that is true, the next step must be to actually gain some level of employment.

All youths in an AILP should be "employed." This might take the form of paid employment, or volunteer or community service. It might mean two hours a week to start or it might mean twenty. What is important is to find a place of employment at some level for all youths in the AILP.

Unfortunately, all too often, I find that youths in an AILP are not employed. In addition, many programs provide little follow-up—post life skills class—to continue support for AILP participants in the pursuit and maintenance of employment. Many agencies, particularly residential facilities, complain about getting "bad" referrals—clients who cannot work. There are no "good" referrals in programs that work with youths, particularly those who have suffered some form of abuse or neglect. It is scary to most young people, even those in intact family units, to "have" to start acting responsible, to listen to "orders" from additional adults, to handle their own lives, to become "adults."

If the AILP description and basic referral criteria are clear, agencies will receive youths who need their services. Part of this need is for help in developing a sense of the "real" world of work. Because the reality is that, at some point, even the "bad" referrals will leave the care and custody of the agency, no matter what else happens. It thus becomes the agency's job, to the best of its ability, to prepare even the worst referral for that reality. Aristotle said, "What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing," and one of the best ways for out-of-home-care youths to accomplish this is in the "real" world of work.

A formal jobs effort, beyond the basic skills class, is a vitally important part of an independent living program. Solid preparation will not only reward youths with jobs but it will lead to better jobs in shorter periods of time. And, most important, youths learn the most valuable of lessons: to meet one of life's major challenges—getting and keeping a job!

I recommend that agencies develop a method for identifying jobs programs within their state/geographic area that can enhance opportunities for youths in out-of-home care to earn income. This, in turn, facilitates an increase in opportunities for job-related skills learning experiences.

An example is the Providence Center in Rhode Island, which developed a cost-sharing program to provide jobs for severely mentally handicapped youths. The Center found these youths jobs by sharing the cost 50-50 with employers. That is, the employer (restaurants, libraries, etc.) paid the youths $5 per hour and the Center reimbursed each job site $2.50 per hour. Furthermore, the Center provided support through weekly contacts with the employer, and other efforts.

A brief review of some of the existing national programs functioning in virtually all states may assist in this program development area. These programs, for whatever reason, are often overlooked in AILPs I have worked with. Most often it is because little research has been undertaken by the agency to determine the availability of such services. Second, at times, little preplanning takes place for inclusion of agency youths in these programs and application deadlines are often missed.

Employment Program

Job Training Partnership Act

In 1982, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) replaced the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) as the government's program to train youths and unskilled and dislocated workers for entry or reentry into the work force, and to provide job training to *economically disadvantaged* individuals and others facing serious barriers to employment. Most agencies and their staffs haven't realized that JTPA was the replacement for CETA. This program is still underpublicized among child welfare workers, and the result is underutilization of the program by those certifiable for service under the act.

In addition, many agencies have backed away from the JTPA program because of some of the politics involved. This program is funded at a very high level, starting at over $3 billion in the 1980s to the present $2.5 billion (approximately), and consequently has become highly politicized in some areas of the country. Even so, agencies should consider (or reconsider) participation in this program because of the great benefits available to youths in an AILP.

Access to the JTPA program is usually through local Private Industry Councils (PICs), which are established in funds distribution areas called Service Delivery Areas (SDAs). The PIC is usually listed in the local telephone book and the members of the council (the community/private sector must be represented by at least 51 percent of the members) are often local individuals, some of whom are already known to the agency.

Certain aspects of the JTPA program are of importance to child welfare agencies:

> *"Titles II-A and II-B allocate funds for the employment and training of economically disadvantaged adults and youths. Foster care youths can be included as eligible persons under the definition of economically disadvantaged.*
>
> *"Forty percent of the Title II-A JTPA funds are to be spent on youths ages 16 to 21. Title II-B funds are for Summer Youth Employment and Training programs."*
>
> North, Mallabar, and Desrochers, CWLA, 1988

It should be noted here that, particularly with this aspect of the program, application deadlines are extremely important. Title II-B requests for proposals (RFPs) usually are publicized around January with the cutoff date for consideration (for a summer employment position) usually occurring around mid-April. Program staff and youths must make contact and apply early to ensure consideration. Additionally, JTPA also has special provisions that allow services to individuals ages 14-15. This federal Act targets available funds to serve the economically disadvantaged (as described above) and the *academically disadvantaged*—which includes out-of-home-care youths.

> *"Training programs for youths under Title II-A include job search assistance, pre-employment training, remedial education and basic skills training, work experience, school-to-work experience, work skills programs, and vocational exploration.*
>
> *"Programs may also receive funding for support services to enable individuals to participate and remain in training programs.*
>
> ***"Performance standards, built into the Act, often result in the Private Industry Councils and SDAs not seeking out the more difficult populations, such as at-risk youths. Foster care agencies, therefore, should be prepared to facilitate employ-***

ment and training efforts by supporting foster care youths while in these programs.

> *"The act provides for communities to address their local employment needs through the collaboration of professionals at the local level. Youth service agencies should join in collaborative efforts to insure that youths with special needs receive appropriate services.*
>
> ***"SDAs, through the PICs, will contract with community-based organizations to operate youth employment programs at the local level. These organizations can be required, as part of a contract, to accept referrals from agencies serving foster care youths. This is the primary method of entry into the JTPA system for foster care youths.***
>
> North, Mallabar, and Desrochers, CWLA 1988
> (emphasis added)

Contact must be made with local PICs and, where appropriate, sponsoring school districts or other agencies offering JTPA programs, to raise their awareness of the special needs of out-of-home-care youths. Agency staffs should make contact with PIC staff to make arrangements to present their AILPs to the PIC staff and board. The presentations should stress the need for the programs to coordinate in serving the out-of-home-care population. It would be very beneficial to ask a PIC member and/or a local school/sponsoring agency staff person to be involved on the AILP advisory board in your area (*see Section 6*).

JTPA also recognizes the need for supportive services such as transportation, child care, meals, health care, temporary shelter, special services and materials for the handicapped, financial counseling, and other reasonable expenses required for participation in the training program. (JTPA Policy Manual and Planning Guide)

Targeted Jobs Tax Credit

Besides the JTPA program, agencies might investigate the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) program, as an additional resource for preparing and placing youths in employment situations. TJTC provides a direct tax credit to companies for hiring employees from among nine categories of targeted groups identified in the legislation. TJTC is not new. It has existed in some form since 1978, and is renewed through June of 1992, with attempts to permanently authorize it pending in Congress.

The TJTC tax credit is substantial—40 percent of the first $6,000 in wages paid to each new employee falling in one of a number of categories, including:

- Low-income individuals 18 to 24 years old—or, in some cases, those 16 to 17—who are hired for summer jobs (economically disadvantaged);
- Handicapped persons; and
- Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

It is an incentive to approach small businesses with the prospect of supplying them with eligible youth who will provide them with a credit of as much as $2,400 per employee. (The credit reduces an employer's tax deduction for wages paid, so the net benefit for a firm with a top marginal tax rate (for illustration purposes, 34 percent) and entitled to a $2,400 credit would be $1,548, but that $1,548 would come right off the top of its tax bill.) Information about and forms to be used in getting a worker certified may be obtained from the IRS, State Employment Office, or local PIC.

Other Employment Programs

Job Corps, Conservation Corps, and other job programs nationally, statewide, and locally sponsored can add to the jobs training and employment options an agency can make available to the AILP. A job readiness skills class is not enough. All youths in an AILP must have the opportunity to be employed while in the program. Additionally, follow-up and maintenance of the employment experience must be a part of the comprehensive planning effort.

Job Related Skills Training

Nationally, there are many programs that have been developed to assist youths in obtaining and maintaining employment. The JIST Company in Indianapolis, Indiana, provides a wealth of curricula and audio and visual materials to assist agencies in the development of a skills training component on jobs (*see Appendix K*). In addition, there are some other truly outstanding examples of job training programs to choose from. One such program is the Job Club approach to employment readiness training:

> *"The job club is a self-help group approach to job-seeking. Job club participants learn proven job seeking techniques and practice work habits and interpersonal skills necessary for maintaining employment once it is obtained. Skill acquisition is accomplished through group discussion, role plays,*

brainstorming, and other activities, with a minimum of lecture.

> *"Job clubs have a well-documented track record with a variety of target groups . . . Self-Help Directed Placement Corporation of San Diego, California, reported a 92 percent placement rate for . . . skills training graduates who had been unable to find employment on their own within 45 days of graduation."*
>
> *Best of Daily Living—1987-89*

Programs such as job clubs should be an integral part of an AILP. Whether the training is internally produced, gained through a purchase of service agreement, or via enrollment in JTPA or similar programs does not really matter. What is important is that such support be readily available for all AILP participants. (*For further information on Job Clubs see Appendix K.*)

Recommendations

■ ***Use Community Resources***

Agencies should develop a plan for utilizing community job-related resources. With the Program Advisory Board (*see Section 6*), volunteers, mentors, and skills-classes youths can receive eligibility information, vocational and occupational guidance, and possibly even priority for certain employment opportunities. This job opportunities action plan should project the methods for developing actual job positions for all youths in the program over a year's period of time. Many job opportunities—such as the JTPA Summer Jobs Program—must be anticipated months in advance to obtain slots. JTPA requires application in late Winter or early Spring (February/March), often with a final cutoff of April 15th or so, for Summer Jobs participation.

■ ***Coordinate with JTPA and TJTC***

It is important to coordinate an agency's internal jobs programs with the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Private Industry Council (PIC), Targeted Jobs/Tax Credits program (TJTC), and local employment organizations (such as unions and agricultural and governmental industries) to establish hiring priorities for youths residing in out-of-home care. Many of these groups are readily approachable. Given the need, commitment, and support of agency staff, perspective employers can be developed so that "actual" job opportunities are available when needed. Without this preparation the jobs' component will be limited and at times non-existent.

■ ***Establish Incentive Programs***

A job-related incentive program should be established to assist in overcoming all possible barriers to employment and savings and create incentives for youths' employment. Methods might include matching youths' earnings or establishing a trust fund so that youths are not penalized for income earned. (An example are the State of Illinois's trust fund procedures.) The latter is connected to youths' savings and eligibility for medical assistance and other income maintenance programs.

■ ***Develop In-House Jobs Program***

Agencies serving larger populations of youths should consider the development of an in-house jobs program. Job Clubs, or some other method of providing a consistent jobs readiness preparatory program, are beneficial in developing the overall acceptance among youths and staffs that all AILP participants should be employed.

■ ***Policy Promoting Full AILP Employment***

Agencies need to consider development of policy that promotes 100 percent employment among AILP participants. Actual work experiences and related activities can become the cornerstone of an AILP. Through employment, youths and staff will see an incentive for participation, and gain involvement in hands-on (experiential) learning. An example is DIAL/SELF, in Greenfield, Massachusetts, which is developing an employment/vocational mentor/volunteer program to provide one-on-one training for youths.

Section 14:

Housing

As discussed in Section 2, many programs in the United States have developed Phase I (informal learning) and Phase II (formal learning) programs for youths in out-of-home care. These approaches vary from basic skill offerings to detailed programming for youths and the adults involved with them. As adolescent independent living programming progresses nationally, the next area of development should be alternative or supervised living arrangement options, which have been described in Phase III activities.

Phase III programming is characterized by the creation of a "safety net" that helps support youths as they try out "living on their own." Cluster apartments and scattered-site apartment living are two of the most common models. As the independent living program develops in an agency, plans need to be made for establishing a multiplicity of "safety net" housing alternatives for youths who complete the program.

Housing availability and affordability are critical issues in most locations. My work in most states reveals that the "jobs" (*see Section 13*) component of the program will be much less difficult to develop than will housing. It is therefore especially important that this aspect of programming be part of the blueprint for present and future actions.

Living Arrangement Options

"A Continuum of Living Arrangement Options," presented earlier in this text, needs to be considered for the independent living program. The objective is to create a pool of available options for youths who are ready to adopt an independent living lifestyle. By looking at this array of options, rather than a single choice, the program will create more opportunities for youths and staffs to consider. Some examples of existing options that might be considered for replication are:

- **Cluster apartments:** An apartment building usually owned or rented by an agency that houses youths in separate apartments, sometimes on the same floor, and is supervised by live-in or overnight staff.
- **Live-in roommates:** The youth shares an apartment with an adult or college student who serves as a mentor or role model. Typically, the apartment is rented or owned by either the adult or agency.
- **Host homes:** A youth rents a room in a family or single adult's home. The youth shares basic facilities and agrees to basic rules while being

largely responsible for his or her own life. (The youth is a renter and the adult a landlord.)

- **Boarding homes:** A facility that provides individual rooms for youths or young adults, often with shared facilities and minimal supervisory expectations. (YMCAs and YWCAs are examples.)
- **Shared houses:** A minimally supervised house is shared by several young adults who take full responsibility for the house and personal affairs.
- **Semi-supervised apartments (scattered-site):** A privately owned apartment is rented by an agency or youth. The young person functions independently with financial support, training, or some monitoring by the agency. Apartments are usually not concentrated but are spread throughout a geographic area.
- **Subsidy programs:** The youth receives a monthly stipend that is used towards a self-chosen living arrangement, food, and personal supplies, while following certain agency guidelines. The subsidy usually diminishes over time, to a point where the youth becomes fully responsible for the financial aspects of maintaining the apartment.

A Continuum of Options

The ideal situation is for youths to be able to move up and down the housing continuum (*see Section 2, Figure 2-4*) An example of this movement is when a youth is placed in an apartment alone and has difficulty adjusting. Rather than terminate him or her from the program, the youth is moved back on the continuum. That does not necessarily mean a move back to foster family care or to the group home. It simply means back to a more structured situation, such as a boarding home.

The youth lives in the more structured environment for a period of time, gains additional confidence and training, and then progresses along the continuum to one of the more independent alternatives. This progression might be another try at solo apartment living, sharing an apartment with a roommate, or sharing an apartment with an adult.

The development of housing options for an AILP needs to include as many alternatives as possible. New Life Youth Services in Cincinnati (OH) employs housing options as part of the AILP program. Youths can come from foster family care, group settings, or some other residential situation, encounter enough difficulties in a scattered site apartment that they cannot stay there and yet still remain in the program.

New Life looks first to moving youths back to more shared options and then assists them in developing the necessary skills and confidence to try independence again. One way that New Life Youth Services helps to ensure that options are available is to rent two rooms in a local boarding situation year-round. The rooms are not always used, but the landlord is assured of having both rented and has agreed to make a third room available for free as part of the agreement.

As the field of adolescent independent living learns more about the development of housing options there will be more opportunities to create a true continuum of situations within Phase III (Supervised Living Arrangements). This will help AILPs to have many different situations available with safety nets attached. Youths should not be terminated from the program solely because they can't make it in the one type of living situation the AILP has available.

Subsidy Programs

Subsidy programs might be the most advantageous option for many agencies. Given the present housing conditions nationally, providing youths with some type of financial subsidy might be the only realistic approach for most youths who are moving to independence—even those who are employed. A variety of alternatives are still needed, however, but the subsidy is useful in "buying" time while alternatives are considered. This plan offers a bridge until youths or other state programs are able to develop alternatives for dealing with the serious shortage of affordable housing.

Subsidy policies allow direct cash payments to youths to maintain their own residences while still in the care and custody of the department/agency. Policy guidelines—covering eligibility criteria, subsidy amount, and agency and youth roles—range from very specific to very liberal. Changes in state laws and licensing procedures often are needed to accommodate a subsidy program. (See Appendix B for examples of two states' licensing regulations for independent living housing options.)

Nationally, subsidy programs differ in the number of youths receiving payments and the reasons for providing payments. Most states have had some type of subsidy policy on their books for many years. This policy has been used most often for those youths who had "failed" all other placements and thus were relegated to their "own" apartments or living situation. Most of these efforts failed, primarily because the youths did not receive the Phases I and Phase II learning experiences of the model described in Section 2. Without the preparation and training required to develop self-sufficiency skills, transitioning youths often became a part of other systems—such as the adult corrections system or the homeless population.

Recent federal initiatives, begun in 1984 in Arizona, illustrate that subsidies can be a truly helpful method for assisting youths to make the transition from out-of-home care. Typically, payments diminish over time, are correlated to youths' earnings, or are used creatively as "add-ons" for food, clothing, furnishings, and utilities. All are intended to buy additional time and supervision for youths before they truly are in Phase IV (self-sufficiency).

Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) in Columbus (OH) pays youths a monthly stipend for being training participants in the Independent Living Program. Stipend dollars vary based on the training tasks of youths, but the average is $500 per month or $125 per week. An additional justification for the stipends is that FCCS staff have shown consistent costs savings for the county with the stipend for transition from Phase III to Phase IV compared to the costs of actual non-independent living program placement (foster homes, group homes, etc.).

> *"A total of 10,590 days were spent by the youths in transitional/independent living in 1990. FCCS stipend dollars spent for these youths to set up and maintain their own transitional/independent living arrangements totaled $275,340. The per diem placement costs for these same youths to stay in or enter paid placement would have been $741,300, saving the county $465,960.*
>
> *"The 1991 first-half savings in diverted placement costs or costs saved due to early release from placement amounted to $336,219. Based on these figures, 1991 total savings will be $672,478, exceeding that of 1990 by $206,478. Total placement savings to the county for the last three years have exceeded $1,000,000.*
>
> *"The Transitional and Independent Living programs are examples of creative services delivered in the best interest of youths that also benefit FCCS—and taxpayers—by providing an effective means of controlling expenditures for out-of-home placement.*
>
> *"Given the FCCS service population of older adolescents unable to remain at or return home (estimated to be between 300-400), the Emancipation Department future projections are that more youths can be served through emancipation services and consequently more dollars can be saved.*
>
> *"Accordingly, in late 1990, the FCCS Board approved recommendations to expand the Emancipation Department and fund the combined 1991 transitional and independent living stipend budgets at an increased level of $500,000."*
>
> *Daily Living*, Fall 1991, Vol. V, No. 4.

Special Note

One of the basic tenets of a housing program is, whenever possible, to establish youths in settings that provide them with the option of remaining in the unit after transition from the care and custody of the agency. Whatever the method of housing chosen, youths need to have the option of "staying" at that site when finally on their own. For example, if a youth has been placed by him or herself in a scattered-site apartment (an apartment with no live-in supervision), the agency should be willing to "give up" that unit to the youth, even though it might have performed the search for and signed the initial apartment lease. The youth should not have to search for another apartment if he or she does not want to.

New Life Youth Services places youths in scattered-site apartments throughout the greater Cincinnati area. The agency finds the apartment, initially signs the lease, and assists the youths in furnishing, stocking of foodstuffs, and acquiring the needed utilities. As youths complete the life skills training component of the program, the apartments are turned over to them, and the leases and utilities transferred to them. In other words, upon completion of the program youths have the option of "staying" in the completely stocked and furnished apartment, taking ownership of all the items inside, or moving to wherever they chose. The youths are not forced to move elsewhere.

In Franklin County (OH), as described above, a subsidy is used to get youths into apartments of their choosing. Thus, when they complete the program they can stay put and not have to move. The subsidy in essence creates a "free choice" kind of marketplace for the youths.

No matter what methods of providing housing are chosen, agencies should strive to create units where youths, at their choosing, can stay post-program. Clearly, some of the methods for providing housing are limited in this respect by their basic nature. For example, cluster housing situations, where live-in supervision is provided, limit the possibility of youths staying in their units post-program.

This is extremely important to the planning process. If your housing choice limits the ability of the youths to stay in one place post-program, alternatives must be considered. This does not mean that you cannot provide cluster housing or an apartment on campus. What it does mean is that the planning process is not complete. Agencies must plan, at some level, for youths after they leave the program's choice of housing, particularly if they cannot stay in the unit or situation they have become accustomed to.

Looking at the housing issue from a planning perspective, it is recommended that a program try to provide for different options along this "new" continuum of care. For instance, if you are using a cluster apartment model, plans need to be made to assist youths in obtaining their own apartments and providing after-discharge services. Youths can then move from the program housing to a place of their own with some early supportive planning and follow-up from staff after transition.

Acquiring Housing for a Program

One question not covered yet in the realm of housing options is how agencies should go about acquiring housing for their programs. Should an agency buy, build, or rent? Many agencies struggle with these questions as they develop their basic program. Whether your program is trying to develop a Phase III housing component or you are the agency's housing provider program, how units are obtained is a very serious question. Some agencies have built new buildings, refurbished older units, guaranteed landlords that a specific number of units will be rented, or have used the rental market at-large in their own geographic area.

Each agency has to look at its resources, community support, and projected longevity before such decisions could be made. I presently hold a bias towards the use of scattered-site apartment units. These are usually apartments that are rented in a general area as they are needed and become available, and which stay in the "affordability" range of the agency and its clients. Scattered-site programs can also have a more liquid budget. If the program needs more apartments it seeks them. If the program census drops they seek fewer units or drop existing apartments. If the program is set up correctly, the elasticity gives a scattered-site model considerable budget flexibility.

The program's responsibility to assist clients in getting their "own" housing has a significant impact on decisions about how to start the Phase III component. Obviously, if the route chosen is to help a young adult stay in his or her own apartment both during and after a program, the need for scattered sites is more apparent.

Nonetheless, the agency may decide that it is in its best interests to own a building, and this raises important issues for program planners. How might this be done? Among the possibilities: a capital fund drive might be undertaken; a foundation might be approached for the needed funds; or a low-cost housing unit might be acquired through a governmental office to be rehabilitated.

Recently, the federal regional offices of the Administration for Children and Families have encouraged linkages and cooperative grant proposals for federal discretionary grant applications between community-based nonprofit agencies and public agencies. The Interagency Council on the Homeless, in 1991, issued an alert that housing acquired from failed savings and loan institutions might become available at no cost through the Resolution Trust Corporation. In addition, they spoke of the possibility that supplemental Housing and Urban Development (HUD) McKinney funding for operations or renovations and Health and Human Services (HHS) discretionary grants for operations might become available competitively.

There are examples of AILPs that have taken each of the above routes to developing housing options, and it is good to remember that what works for one program may not work for another.

The field of AILP is not only starting to emerge on its own but also is becoming known to other agencies who can work cooperatively to the advantage of young adults. Whatever the housing route chosen by an agency, ears should always remain open to the latest possibilities for expanding those efforts. These openings might occur in both the private and public sectors.

Supervision

An often observed mistake made in AILP Phase III concerns the supervision of youths in their own living units. If a housing situation is set up where a young person is "on his own" in a unit, the agency's responsibility for supervision has not been relieved, particularly in the beginning. In fact, the opposite should occur. Supervision should be high in the initial placement period, which could be a few weeks to a month or longer.

As the young person adjusts, supervision can diminish. All too often, staff remove themselves completely from daily contact—early on—and the youth flounders. Supervision should be reduced over a more judicious period of time. Contacts can diminish from physical to verbal (via telephone), or to agency office visits. The young person will give clear messages about level of need by their actions and in the beginning, staff must "see" to understand the need.

Transitional Group Homes

One of the main residential child-caring structures is the group home. These homes usually house between 5 and 15 youths, with an average setting accommodating about 8. Traditionally, the group home has been community based. Youths live in the community, attend local schools, and are a part of a neighborhood. The Transitional Home is quite similar to the traditional group home. The differences lie in the expectations and control of the youths and staffs, and the extent of the program's involvement with youths on their discharge planning.

A transitional group home focuses on providing life skills training and youth management of the daily household functions, including cooking, shopping, and maintenance. The expectation is that all youths are employed part-time and attend school. The program does extensive preparation and planning for the youths' transition to a living arrangement away from the group home. The program assists in the acquisition and furnishing of housing and initial supervision as the youths transition. Preparation before discharge, management of the transition, and follow-up after discharge are program services. The extent of each of these services is up to individual programs, but the ideal is for a transitional group home to be as comprehensive an AILP as possible.

Transitional group homes that work are usually facilities that have experience and a good understanding of the basics of group home operations. They then move towards turning more responsibility over to youths in the program. With the cooperation of the referring agencies and the agency with primary care and custody (legally), the preparation, management, and follow-up of youths in this setting provides a distinct advantage over traditional group homes.

Staff in transitional group homes do little cooking, shopping, or cleaning. They supervise and teach skills. They provide planning services, advocate for employment opportunities and vocational training, develop housing options and community resources, manage youths' transitions, and provide follow-up services, all of which are done while trying to minimize the need for "crowd control."

Recommendations

To plan a comprehensive housing component the following are recommended.

- ***Include Housing Component in AILP***

Agencies should include development of a housing component in the three-year planning process for adolescent independent living programming. This would be planning for Phases III and IV.

- ***Many Housing Options***

Agencies should develop as many different types of living situations as possible for youths to transition to in Phase III. This creates a larger pool of housing choices for program participants. In addition, some of these options can be available for youths to move into upon discharge (Phase IV).

- ***Develop Subsidy Policy***

Serious consideration should be given to the development of a subsidy policy tied to the independent living program and Phase III. The subsidy would have two purposes: to assist youths in setting up a living situation; and to create a more solid base for transition into Phase IV.

- ***Encourage Transitional Homes***

Group home providers need to be encouraged to move their programs more into being "transitional" living situations. Transitional programs are group facilities whose independent living program includes moving youths out into their own living situations and providing support or follow-up services. The program has a strong employment component and assigns household responsibilities to youths, as well as providing standard skills training.

Section 15:

Follow-up After Transition/ Post-Discharge Services

Trudy Festinger, in her book *No One Ever Asked Us . . . A Postscript to Foster Care*, found in over 250 interviews with young men and women who were discharged from out-of-home care to their own responsibility that they rarely were asked about how they fared as adults and how they viewed their experiences in foster care. She recommends that agencies establish information centers, similar to alumni offices, to gather this information.

> *"These [centers] could provide foster care graduates with a place to turn for information and referral during the first several years following final discharge.*
>
> *"Such offices could even provide graduates with brochures containing information on community facilities that address various needs. The nature of requests flowing into such offices could, in turn, be used as a source for ideas about how better to prepare youths for independent living."*
>
> *No One Ever Asked Us . . . A Postscript to Foster Care*

A major goal of an independent living preparation program is to assist youths in exiting out-of-home care with a well-developed, predominantly community-based support system. Ideally, this community-based or personal support system (PSS), takes over when agency support ends and youths enter adult living (Phase IV).

Accomplishing this goal is not enough. I have, throughout this report, recommended numerous other actions that need to be undertaken to support successful transitions. One final area requires attention. The post-discharge aspects of an independent living program are of substantial importance. What happens to youths after they leave care? To whom do youths turn when the going gets rough or they encounter crises that tax their limits financially, socially, and emotionally? Can youths who have left the system give something back to the agency and their peers? Can programs expend funds post-discharge to assist youths?

All the above and many more questions need to be considered when completing the "comprehensive" planning I have addressed from the beginning of this text. When a solid program is developed, much of what is needed by youths to be self-sufficient will fall into place. This includes the possibility of some agency connection post-discharge.

What forms can this aspect of a program take? One group home I have worked with has developed an agreement with the State Department of Children's Services whereby the Department pays the group home two months of per diem when youths are discharged to their own care. This payment is used to insure 12 months of follow-up services for each youth by the group home staff.

Another facility has a staff person assigned to go and see youths each month post-discharge, for up to 12 months. This staff person's role is to check in with each youth, offer advice, brainstorm solutions to problems, and generally to be a supportive adult for the young person. They also gather information about the facility and its programs—post-discharge.

In a recent attempt to look at the outcomes of youths who were served by the foster care system, Richard Barth, DSW, of the University of California at Berkeley, examined the experiences of 55 youths. All 55 had left foster care during the permanency planning era—post-1980. Barth found:

> *"In sum, this sample of former foster youths are often struggling with ill health, poor educations, severe housing problems, substance abuse, and criminal behavior.*
>
> *"On the average, youths are leaving foster care while still 17 years old, even before their eligibility ends and they must leave care. This suggests the need to begin independent living preparation early and to identify ways to better provide adolescents with services that encourage them to remain in care longer and to their greater benefit. Respondents often complained that they were allowed to just drift out of foster care without any services, guidance, pep talks, or goodbyes."*
>
> *On Their Own: The Experiences of Youth After Foster Care—1990*

All of these attempts to follow-up with youths are important. Part of the planning process for each AILP needs to address the post-discharge aspects. How can programs continue to assist youths? What have youths got to say about the AILP and the out-of-home-care system, and can planners learn anything from that contact that will allow them to create better support programs.

Finally, AILPs should ask referring agencies and social workers their opinions about the AILP. Did the program serve youths in a manner that was expected? What would the referring agency or workers like to have done differently? Would the referring agency or workers like to do more to prepare referrals for the AILP?

Appendix H contains examples of follow-up surveys for both youths and referring agency social workers:

- How well do you feel the AILP helped to prepare you for living on your own?
- What did you learn while in the program?
- What do you feel you did not learn while in the program?
- Do you feel that the staff gave you enough supervision and support?
- What changes would you make in the program?
- Where did you go when you left the program?
- Is there anything that the AILP staff could have done differently that might have increased the progress of this youth?
- Was the AILP staff timely in making referrals for the youth, did they assist the youth in getting housing, employment, etc.?

These are just some of the questions that youths and referral sources can be asked post-discharge. All of the above can be invaluable in assessing program results and the need for possible changes. In addition, they keep the program connected with youths and referral sources, all of whom could become stronger program advocates and resources in the future.

If planned for, follow-up after discharge will allow an agency to:

- Find out if youths received needed services, during the AILP, that support them as they live independently.
- Gather information from participants on the utility of existing programming and resources, and any expansion of programming they now perceive as necessary.
- Provide a "lifeline" to youths consisting of emergency services, resources, or contacts.
- Use former participants as resources for their peers and the independent living program.

Recommendations

- ***Follow-Up Survey***

It is recommended that agencies develop a follow-up survey for youths who have exited out-of-home care. The survey should inquire about the utility of services they received during the AILP, what services they presently need, and other pertinent follow-up questions. The survey needs to be sent—at least—to youths at 90 and 360 days post-discharge. To ensure a greater degree of response than generally is seen in this type of effort, a $15-$25 stipend might need to be paid to youths for completing the survey(s).

- ***Involve Former Out-of-Home-Care Youths***

It is recommended that the agency seek former out-of-home-care youths for membership on the youth advisory boards recommended in Section 6. Many programs have looked to young adults who were former out-of-home-care residents to assist them in providing leadership and guidance to younger youths and the overall AILP. One such area is the formation and ongoing membership on program and youth advisory boards. Whenever possible, former residents should be asked to accept an appointment to AILP boards. The City of Philadelphia's independent living program, for example, has had a youth advisory board almost from the outset. The program has consistently attempted to have approximately half of the members be former out-of-home care residents who are now on their own.

- ***Identify Out-of-Home-Care Alumni***

It is recommended that the agency identify former out-of-home-care youths as "alumni." An alumni brochure should be developed requesting former program youths' continued contact and involvement in present programming. These individuals may be able to serve as teachers, mentors or volunteers, group facilitators, and in other resource roles. There is a National Association of Former Foster Children that might assist in development of a local Chapter or in locating their members who reside in an agency's geographic area. The DIAL/SELF program in Greenfield (MA) has been developing a brochure and alumni component for its AILP.

- ***Identify Other Community Resource Persons***

The agency should employ outreach methods to enlist the assistance of other community persons who spent time in out-of-home care, not necessarily in the agency's care and custody, who might want to become program resources. Local news media and other public service outlets are avenues to explore to get the information out to the community at-large. Where military installations exist, Family Resource Centers can be useful in identifying prospects in the different service branches.

- ***Special Note***

These recommendations require a strong screening component so that persons chosen would be both appropriate and positive role models for youth in an AILP.

For public agencies, the post-discharge program component has become more feasible with the extensions of time that agencies are permitted to stay involved with youths and to expend federal funds (presently up to age 21). For the private agencies, many of whom have been following their graduates for years, this may need only some extra planning or refinement. However, how the post-discharge services and contacts are accomplished is almost irrelevant. The main concern is that post-discharge follow-up be undertaken in a planned manner and considered a part of the truly comprehensive approach to delivery of AILP services.

Section 16:

Mini- or Seed Grants

In many child care systems, the possibility exists for allowing individual programs or divisions to "try out" AILP concepts through the use of mini- or "seed" grants. These efforts can produce significant interest and enthusiasm for AILP by individuals and staffs.

There are many ways to approach the development of mini- or seed grants. It is appropriate to do so after some awareness and interest have been generated in the organization for independent living programming. Distribution would be based upon submission of proposals in response to a simple RFP from a program development office (or similar administrative structure).

The hope is that staff will be stimulated to produce ideas on providing AILP services to youths on their caseloads, in the group home, or residential facility.

The Application Phase

In developing the Request For Proposal (RFP), the objective is to stimulate individuals' good ideas. The basic criteria are:

- That the proposed activity is within the scope of the established objectives of the program (agency overall, child welfare, or AILP) or stated purposes.
- That the action to be taken is valuable because it will solve an immediate problem or elicit fundamental information, or because it will extend existing knowledge and assist in the eventual solution of a problem concerning adolescents.

The length of the proposal can be as little as two or three paragraphs or as long as a few pages. Most government agencies have standard forms and private agencies can come up with a basic form. You do *not* want to overwhelm staff with the application process.

Try to minimize the requirements. Make the grants "small" seed grants that will give staff opportunities to try out new ideas with youths, engage the young people in AILP type activities, and give both groups time to have some fun. Grants could be as little as $100, or as much as $1,000-$2,000. All grants will motivate and give staff a chance to become involved with the AILP.

Recommendations

■ ***Solicit Mini- or Seed Grants With RFPs***

Agencies should develop a mini- or seed-grant program by sending out an RFP with a few basic suggestions. For example:

- Establishing a teen club for foster teens.

  - Planning a teen conference in a particular geographic area bringing youths together for a day to discuss independent living, jobs, housing, careers, etc.
  - Developing a basic curriculum for a skills class, or offering several skills sessions for youths.

- ***Materials as Well as Cash Grants***

Programs should consider RFPs for materials when cash grants are not feasible. Mini-grants could be given to staffs, branches, a group home, etc., to purchase independent living materials or create a resource library for staff. Examples include the purchase of a Daniel Memorial Independent Living Skills Computer Software Assessment and Transitional Planning Package or some alternative and test-piloting its use (*see Section 10*); or buying curricula for testing in a youth skills training program.

Section 17:

Special Groups

Within all child serving agencies there are special groups of youths who often are overlooked or underserved because of their particular needs. Teen parents (both fathers and mothers), the physically and emotionally handicapped, and corrections and treatment center youths often are not served by initial independent living programming efforts.

These groups need to be studied by agencies to determine the number that exist in their out-of-home-care systems. As an example, in 1991, I requested that such a survey be conducted to determine the number of teen parents in one small, sparsely populated western state's foster care system. (These data had not previously been gathered.)

Preliminary findings, of this very basic canvass, showed that there were approximately 23 teen mothers and 12 pregnant teens in the foster care system. In one county alone, there were 19 mothers and 9 pregnant teens. In all probability, if a "true" study of the population had been undertaken, it is likely that the total number of pregnant teens and teen parents would actually have been much higher. Even these preliminary figures lent substance to the need for considering specific independent living programming for teen mothers—at the very least in the one county.

"[In Oregon,] during fiscal year 1988-89, a pilot project was developed between the State of Oregon's Children's Services Division (CSD) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Division (VRD) to help older foster children with disabilities achieve greater self-support and independence.

"A cooperative interagency agreement was established to determine if VRD services could benefit those older handicapped youths (i.e., ages 16 through 21) who were living in CSD foster homes. The idea was to help create a successful bridge from foster care dependency to adult living for these handicapped teenagers.

"These youths are severely disabled, by single or multiple handicaps such as mental retardation, hearing and visual impairments, serious emotional disturbances, severe physical disabilities, substance abuse, cerebral palsy, seizure disorders, and other varied handicaps.

"As a result of the project's success, VRD now has funding in its base budget to service 50 CSD handicapped youths per year. The project also encouraged close linkage between VRD and CSD professional staff while jointly providing comprehensive services to mutual clients.

> *"By expanding the capacity of VRD to serve handicapped CSD clients on a statewide basis and utilizing the resources and expertise of both agencies simultaneously, older handicapped teenagers in foster care can be better prepared to make their eventual transition to more independent adult living and employment.*
>
> *Daily Living*, Fall 1990, Vol. IV, No. 4

As demonstrated in these two examples, there are special interest groups of adolescents in sufficient numbers to warrant consideration for programming. Agencies need to assess the number of youths who fall into the "special group" categories and then determine if an AILP component for these individuals is necessary. If it is necessary, then a part of the planning process needs to be devoted to independent living preparation for these special groups.

Recommendations

To meet the needs of these special populations, the following are recommended:

- ***Survey***

Agencies should undertake a survey to determine what special interest groups exist and the population numbers for each.

- ***Identify Best Options to Serve Special Groups***

Once the number of special groups and the populations of each are determined, research should be undertaken to determine the most feasible method of providing independent living services to each. One example would be agreements with other divisions or departments to help older out-of-home-care youths with disabilities achieve greater self-support and independence.

- ***Develop AILP Component for Teen Parents***

Agencies should develop an independent living program component for teen mothers and fathers and pregnant teens. I have not found a foster care system nationally that does not have pregnant teens or teen moms and dads. This fact and the special needs of these youths warrants a specific effort for them. What I often see happen is that youths, even those presently enrolled in a AILP, are not accepted or are asked to leave once their pregnancy is known. It is extremely important that all programs have a plan for the eventuality of dealing with pregnant teens in a manner that meets their special needs.

Particularly with teen moms and dads, there are usually certain community groups that express interest in supporting the development of resources for them. Efforts should be made to identify these groups (and/or a community-based POS agency) to develop a program component for the agency and this group; or, alternatively, to start an in-house component for the AILP.

Section 18:

Overall Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

"If you don't know where you are going you will end up somewhere else."

—Dr. David Campbell

It is recommended that agencies develop their independent living programs in progressive phases, with each phase linked to every other. As this phasing-in of the program takes place, there will be a recognition that some needs are still unmet. Other gaps in the service delivery system will emerge as well, creating an ongoing need to modify the program. The development of a "new" program takes time and planning. The recommendations of this text will require coordination.

The objective of this section is to offer guidance in establishing priorities and a reasonable sequence for planning and implementing the program. Recommendations are grouped in three phases, paralleling the phases noted in Section 2. Within these phases, this section establishes priorities for consideration. Note, however, that clear distinctions between recommendations are, at times, difficult to make and many of the tasks are presented for simultaneous planning, development, and implementation.

Furthermore, recommendations, at times, will not be clearly connected to a particular Phase. For example, a Phase III recommendation on the one hand clearly needs consideration after design of Phases I and II. At the same time, its existence in Phase III needs to influence planning in Phases I and II. Further, as planning and implementation of Phase I and Phase II programming alters the need for the Phase III activity, those early adjustments will need to be made. Clearly, then, flexibility needs to be the hallmark of the planning activity.

Overall, I believe the planning/implementation process will require upwards of three years, considering such critical factors as the need for policy and staff changes, securing funding, and changes in legislation. Certainly this time frame is not unusual in the best of circumstances. A principal purpose of this text is to provide guidance for the short-term actions as well as to offer a blueprint for the longer term.

This text makes a distinct effort to recognize the differences that exist between urban and rural areas. These differences need not, I believe, diminish the practicality of instituting independent living preparation in all branches of an agency. Certainly alterations in methods and the overall level of programming will be necessary to adjust to the environmental differences. As the recommended state/agencywide networking is developed, the rural areas will benefit significantly. If each site, branch, or office will take the initiative to assess and develop its own community resources, it will have significant support even without strong statewide or agencywide efforts. A creative staff can do a great deal to assist young people in out-of-home care as they move through the critical developmental years toward self-sufficiency.

The following is a projection for overall implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. This model projection can be laid out or supplemented by other planning methods, such as a Gannt Chart or Management-by-Objectives format.

Phase I Implementation (Year 1)

1. Develop overall policy statement. (*Section 4*)
2. Research and develop recommendations for changes to statutes. (*Section 4*)
3. Develop guidelines for independent living case plans. (*Sections 2 and 10*)
4. Develop policy for coordinating with other systems that provide foster care services in the state or geographic area. (*Section 2*)
5. Under the guidance of the training unit or staff development office, develop a coordinated training/professional development effort with other systems providing foster care. (*Section 9*)
6. Develop series of orientation and training sessions for staff, primary caregivers, purchase of service providers, community representatives, staff from other departments, and youths. (*Section 5*)
7. Develop informational packets on independent living. (*Sections 2 and 5*)
8. Develop a resource lending library. (*Section 5*)
9. Develop youth skills training opportunities. (*Section 9*)
10. Develop an action plan for mentor/volunteer services to support independent living efforts. (*Sections 2 and 11*)
11. Develop statewide, branch, youth advisory boards. (*Sections 2 and 6*)
12. Develop a resource directory of community youth services available within all locations. (*Section 5*)
13. Increase foster home recruitment and licensing activities. (*Section 4*)
14. Improve foster parent or primary caregivers training and preparation. (*Sections 4 and 7*)
15. Mandate participation in independent living training for all primary caregivers and AILP staffs. (*Section 9*)
16. Develop RFP for awarding of mini-grants. (*Section 16*)

Phase II Implementation (Year 2)

1. Institute staff specialization pilot with caseloads specifically for adolescents. (*Section 8*)
2. Develop incentives for youths' program participation. (*Section 7*)
3. Develop incentives for foster parent/residential staff program participation. (*Section 7*)
4. Undertake a survey to determine what special-interest youth groups exist and the need for programming for each. (*Section 17*)
5. Develop teen conference concept. (*Section 12*)
6. Develop staff training for all in-house staffs and purchase of service providers. (*Section 9*)
7. Develop a jobs/vocational program component. (*Section 13*)

Phase III Implementation (Year 3)

1. Revise licensing requirements to include alternative and transitional living situations. (*Section 4 and 14*)
2. Develop a housing program component. (*Section 14*)
3. Develop an after-transition/post-discharge service component. (*Section 15*)

Text References

- *Assessment Packet.* Available from Independent Living Resources, Inc., P.O. Box 1013, Edenton, NC 27932, (919) 489-1351 or 482-2937, $21.95 (includes shipping and handling).
- *Best of Daily Living 1987-89.* Available from Independent Living Resources, Inc., P.O. Box 1013, Edenton, NC 27932, (919) 489-1351 or 482-2937, $21.95 (includes shipping and handling).
- *Daily Living.* Available from Independent Living Resources, Inc., P.O. Box 1013, Edenton, NC 27932, (919) 489-1351 or 482-2937, $19 per year; $35 for 2 years; $28/$45 foreign subscriptions (US Funds).
- *Guide to Independence: Where to Go When You're on Your Own.* Monterey County Department of Social Services, Office for Community Services and Children's Services, 1201 Broadway, Seaside, CA 93906, (408) 755-4650.
- *Independent Living Services for At-Risk Adolescents.* Edmund Mech (ed.), *Child Welfare*—Special Issue, November-December 1988. Child Welfare League of America, 440 First Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001-2085.
- *Independent Living—Services for Youth in Substitute Care* (June, 1986). Westat, Inc., 1650 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850.
- *No One Ever Asked Us . . . A Postscript to Foster Care.* Trudy Festinger, Columbia University Press, 1983.
- *On Their Own: The Experiences of Youth After Foster Care.* Richard P. Barth, DSW. Available from Welfare Research Group, School of Social Welfare, University of California at Berkeley, 1950 Addison Street, Suite 104, Berkeley, CA 94704, $10.
- *Pass It On: Helping Staff to Share Knowledge and Skills With Youths.* William V. Griffin and Dorothy I. Ansell, Independent Living Resources, Inc., P.O. Box 1013, Edenton, NC 27932, (919) 489-1351 or 482-2937. Distributed by The National Resource Center for Youth Services, University of Oklahoma, 202 West Eighth, Tulsa, OK 74119-1419, (918) 585-2986, Participants Manual: $15; Trainer's Manual: $45; both manuals: $55.
- *Roads to Choose: A Guidebook for Independent Living* (1989) and *A Handbook for Teens in Foster Care* (May 1990). Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Division of Youth Services, Smith/Wilson Building, 300 SW Oakley, Topeka, KS 66606, (913) 296-4646, Contact person: Janet Davenport.
- *The Southeastern Directory.* The Duke Endowment, 1500 City National Center, Charlotte, NC 28202, (704) 376-0291.
- *Volunteer Mentoring.* Nebraska Department of Social Services, Distributed by the NRCYS, University of Oklahoma, 202 West Eighth, Tulsa, OK 74119-1419, (918) 585-2986, Coordinator's Handbook: $70, Participant's Handbook: $10.
- *Youth Participation in Adult Committees.* Kathlyn Thorp, Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, 30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 908, Madison, WI 53703, (608) 255-6351.

APPENDIX A

ACYF-PI-01: 1/12/90
ACYF-IM-90-26: 12/12/90

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human development services

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children, Youth and Families

1. Log No. ACYF-PI-01
2. Issuance Date: 01/12/90
3. Originating Office: Children's Bureau
4. Key Word: Independent Living Initiatives

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO Administrators of State Public Welfare Agencies Administering Title IV-E of the Social Security Act

SUBJECT Independent Living Initiatives Program for Fiscal Years 1990 Through 1992

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES Sections 472, 477, 474(a)(1)-(4), and Section 475(1) of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act; ACYF-PI-87-01, issued February 10, 1987; ACYF-OI-87-06, issued October 30, 1987; ACYF-PI-88-08, issued December 23, 1988.

SUMMARY The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-272), through the addition of Section 477 to Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, authorized funds to States for fiscal years 1987 and 1988 for service programs and activities to assist eligible children in Title IV-E foster care to make the transition from foster care to independent living.

The Technical and Miscellaneous Revenue Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-647) amended Section 477 to continue the authorization through fiscal year 1989; authorized States to elect to serve non-Title IV-E eligible children, and to serve children up to six months after discharge from foster care; prohibited payments for room and board; and made certain other technical changes.

The Independent Living (IL) Program was reauthorized most recently by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-239) for the Federal fiscal years 1990 through 1992. This Act also authorized, and the Congress has provided, an increase in IL funds from $45 million for FY 1989 to $50 million for FY 1990. For FY 1991, $60 million is authorized and, for FY 1992, $70 million.

PURPOSE The purposes of this Program Instruction are to provide information about the reauthorization of the Independent Living Initiatives Program for three years; to specify the application procedures for States to use in applying for funds for fiscal years 1990, 1991, and 1992; and to restate the reporting requirements prescribed for States which receive these funds.

Programs and Activities: Expenditures must be related to the specific purposes of the Independent Living Initiatives.

As stated in Section 477(d) of the Act, such purposes may include programs to:

(1) enable participants to seek a high school diploma or its equivalent or to take part in appropriate vocational training;

(2) provide training in daily living skills, budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, and career planning;

(3) provide for individual and group counseling;

(4) integrate and coordinate services otherwise available to participants;

(5) provide for the establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the program;

(6) provide each participant with a written transitional independent living plan which shall be based on an assessment of his needs, and which shall be incoprorated into his case plan, as described in Section 475(1); and

(7) provide participants with other services and assistance designed to improve their transition to independent living.

States may use varying methods and strategies to achieve the objectives of the program. They may wish to include an assessment of existing programmatic and systemic barriers to the successful transition of a child in foster care into independent living. Training programs for agency staff may be a critical element. Specialized training and consultation for foster parents and other child care providers may assist in the development and improvement of an important link for the child between dependence and independence.

Other activities under the Title IV-E-IL program may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) counseling and other similar assistance related to educational and vocational training, preparation for a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or for higher education, job readiness, job search assistance and placement programs;

(2) counseling and instruction in basic living skills, such as: money management, home management, consumer skills, parenting, health care, access to community resources, transportation, housing options and location;

(3) individual and group counseling, workshops and conferences for improved self-esteem and self-confidence, and interpersonal and social skills training and development;

(4) coordination with other components of the State's independent living program, e.g., supervised practice living, and establishment of linkages with Federal agencies and State and local organizations such as: the Department of Education, Special and Vocational Education programs and local education agencies; State and community colleges; Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration programs including the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which administers Private Industry Councils (PICs) and the Job Corps; Vocational Rehabilitation; volunteer programs (e.g., ACTION); medical and dental public and private providers; State and community mental health agencies and organizations; and local housing advisors;

(5) establishment of a system of outreach which would encourage youth currently in foster care to participate in independent living programs; and development of community organizational efforts and ongoing support networks for youth leaving foster care;

(6) involvement of relatives and/or foster parents in the development of the child's independent living skills; and training youth in decision-making, planning, and time management.

Prohibition: IV-E-IL funds may not be used for the provision of room or board for youth receiving independent living services.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children, Youth and Families

1. Log No. ACYF-IM-90-26
2. Issuance Date: 12-12-90
3. Originating Office: Children's Bureau
4. Key Word: Independent Living Initiatives

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO:	State Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Title-IV-E of the Social Security Act and Indian Tribes and Indian Tribal Organizations.
SUBJECT:	Availability of FY 1991 Funds for the Independent Living Program
LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES:	Sections 472, 474(a), 475(1), and 477 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act; ACYF-PI-90-01, issued January 12, 1990; ACYF-PI-90-16, issued October 2, 1990

BACKGROUND: The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989, Public Law (P.L.) 101-239, reauthorized the Independent Living (IL) Program for fiscal years (FY) 1990 through 1992 and provided an increase in IL funds from $45 million for FY 1989 to $50 million for FY 1990. For FY 1991, $60 million is authorized; for FY 1992, $70 million.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-508) appropriated $60 million for the Independent Living Program for FY 1991. For FY 1991, all States are entitled to their share of $45 million with no requirement for cost sharing. However, State matching funds will be required for any state that elects to receive some or all of its share of the additional amount above $45 million ($15 million).

P.O. 101-508 also amended Section 477 to extend, at State option, eligibility for IL services supported with Federal funds to children formerly in foster care, up to age 21.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Information Memorandum is to provide information rearding (1) the procedures to be followed in applying for FY 1991 IL funds and in reporting on program activities and services; (2) the extension of eligibility for IL programs up to age 21; and (3) the amount of individual State allotments under the FY 1991 appropriation of $60 million for the IL Initiatives Program.

INFORMATION: **FY 1991 Application Procedures.** The instructions provided by Program Instruction ACYF-PI-90-01 (Attachment A), issued January 12, 1990, remain in effect and must be followed in order to receive FY 1991 IL funds. The Program Instruction sets forth information regarding the availbility of funds, definition of eligible participants (amended by P.L. 101-508), IL programs and activities, prohibition of the use of IL funds for room and board, application requirements and submittal, reallotment of funds, reporting requirements, and application approval and changes.

The closing date for receipt of FY 1991 applications is January 31, 1991. The funds awarded in FY 1991 must be obligated and expended by September 30, 1992.

The Program Report covering FY 1990 activities and services is due not later than January 1, 1991.

Extension of Age Eligibility: P.L. 101-508 amended Section 477(a)(2)(C) to allow States the option to include youth in IL services and participation in IL programs after leaving foster care until they reach the age of 21. For example, if a youth left foster care at age 17 (whether Title IV-E eligible or non-Tiele IV-E eligible), the State could, if it wished, continue to provide assistance to the youth up to age 21. This provision amended Section 477(a)(2)(C) and was effective October 1, 1990.

The legislation, as amended, not only continues the option for a State to provide IL services after foster care, but extends the time during which IL services may be provided. Previously, a State could opt to provide IL services for a six-month period after discharge from foster care. Under the amendment, States may now opt to provide IL services up to the time a former foster child reaches age 21. Therefore, the State should indicate in its application (1) whether it elects to provide IL services to children after foster care and (2) if so, provide information on how this option will be integrated into the State's overall planning and implementation of IL services.

FY 1991 IL Allotments. On October 20, 1990, Program Instruction ACYF-PI-90-16 (Attachment B) was issued to provide information on the requirement for dollar-for-dollar State match of Federal IL funds over $45 million. The PI also provided instructions on regulatory requirements as well as on other limitations regarding the State match.

Therefore, as part of the FY 1991 application process, each State much (1) indicate whether or not it will apply for and match the additional funds over the $45 million basic amount; (2) specify the amount of the funds it will apply for and match, if applicable; (3) state whether or not it will accept and match additional funds that may become available through the reallocation of IL funds; and (4) specify the minimum and maximum amount of reallotted funds the State will apply for and match, if available. These new application requirements are summarized in outline form in Attachment C.

Attachment D provides the FY 1991 IL allotments for each State and includes both the basic amount (the State's share of $45 million) and the additional amount available for State match (the State's share of the additional $15 million appropriated).

APPENDIX B

Licensing Regulations

- ***Delaware: Delacare***
  (Outline of report. Contact Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families for full text.)
- ***Ohio***

DELACARE

REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAMS

State of Delaware
Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

FOREWORD

The requirements for Transitional Living Programs were developed by the Department in response to the need for programs which prepare adolescents for independence or self-sufficiency.

In developing these requirements, the Department sought the advice and assistance of knowledgeable persons representative of the field of independent and transitional living services.

The requirements are divided into three distinct parts. The first part contains requirements which must be met by all transitional living programs in order to be licensed. The remaining two parts contain separate requirements for programs providing congregate living or community living services. Through this design, the Department has attempted to define specific requirements rather than broad standards so that compliance can be measured more accurately and consistently.

The Department sincerely appreciates the contributions and efforts of the members of the work group who developed Delacare: Requirements for Transitional Living Programs and asks for their continued support in working together to provide better care and services to children in need of placement.

The following individuals participated in the work group which developed Delacare: Requirements for Transitional Living Programs.

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Andy Vincent
Beverly Williams

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STATE OF OHIO

SOCIAL SERVICES **5101:2-42-19**

5101:2-42-19 Requirements for provision of life skill services and independent living arrangements.

Content

Outlines the requirements for provision of life skill services and independent living placement and describes the scope of services.

History

Originated 10/1/89. Amended 1/1/91. Current effective date 1/1/91.

ORC Cite

Sections 5103.03, 5153.16.

Rule

(A) Life skill services shall be provided to each child in substitute care who has attained the age of sixteen to prepare for transition from substitute care to independent living. Life skill services and placement in an independent living arrangement may be continued for an individual over eighteen years of age for whom a juvenile court has retained jurisdiction and continued a dispositional order to enable the individual to graduate from high school or vocational school.

(B) Life skill services may be provided by mentors or staff of a public children services agency (PCSA), private child-placing agency (PCPA) or private noncustodial agency (PNA), other community agencies, organizations, schools, or institutions.

(C) Life skill services as defined in rule 5101:2-42-02 of the Administrative Code should address, but not be limited to, issues or concerns related to the following:

- (1) Daily living, including:
    - (a) Maintaining a residence (landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities, basic home maintenance).
    - (b) Home management (food preparation, nutrition, cleaning, laundry and home safety).
    - (c) Shopping (purchasing food, household supplies, clothing).
    - (d) Money management (budgeting, banking).
    - (e) Utilization of community services and systems (transportation, libraries, accessing assistance programs).
    - (f) Utilization of leisure time.
    - (g) Personal care, hygiene and safety.
- (2) Personal decision making and communication skills.
- (3) Evaluating personal educational needs.
- (4) Planning for job and/or career development.
- (5) Securing and maintaining employment.
- (6) Securing a residence.
- (7) Planning for ongoing and emergency personal health care needs.
- (8) Building a positive self-image and self-esteem regarding the youth's pending emancipation from substitute care.

(D) Each PCSA or PCPA shall conduct or obtain a life skill assessment for each child who is in substitute care and who has attained the age of sixteen to prepare for transition from substitute care to independent living. A life skill assessment shall establish the need for life skill services identified in paragraph (C) of this rule. A life skill assessment shall be completed by the next scheduled semiannual administrative review (SAR) pursuant to rule 5101:2-42-43 of the Administrative Code, following the child's sixteenth birthday or his entry into substitute care, whichever occurs earlier.

(E) Each PCSA or PCPA shall provide or obtain those life skill services, commensurate with the child's need and level of understanding, as indicated by the life skill assessment conducted in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (D) of this rule.

(F) Placement of a child in an independent living arrangement shall only be made after the PCSA or PCPA which proposes to make the placement has been satisfied that the following general site and safety requirements for independent living arrangements have been met:

(1) All structures associated with the independent living arrangement are maintained in a safe state of repair.

(2) The independent living arrangement is adequately heated, lighted and ventilated. Unvented kerosene heaters shall not be used, unless the heater has been approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory."

(3) No firearm or other projectile weapon is kept.

(4) The independent living arrangement has access to an operating telephone.

(5) The independent living arrangement has a continuous supply of safe drinking water.

(6) The independent living arrangement has an operating bathroom and toilet facilities located within the independent living arrangement and connected to an indoor plumbing system.

(7) Garbage is disposed of on a regular basis and garbage stored outside the independent living arrangement shall be in covered containers or closed bags.

(8) The independent living arrangement has an operating smoke alarm approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" on each level of occupancy.

(9) The independent living arrangement has a B-C portable chemical fire extinguisher in operating order in the cooking area of the living arrangement.

(G) An independent living environment shall not have more than five children residing in the home unless it is licensed as a group home pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-9 of the Administrative Code.

(H) Nothing in this rule shall prohibit a PCSA or PCPA from establishing additional site and safety requirements or other placement criteria for an independent living arrangement.

APPENDIX C

State of Oregon: Emphasizing Community Connections and Services for Independent Living

Lee Cornforth

Federal enactment of the Independent Living Initiatives has been one of the most beneficial programs ever available to older teenagers in foster care.

Oregon, for some time, has funded an Independent Living subsidy program for teenagers with state general funds. There wasn't money, however, to prepare youths before they went into apartment living. The Social Security Act IV-E Independent Living Grant was exactly what Oregon's Community Services Division (CSD) needed to really make sure teenagers were ready to take their next big step into adulthood.

The development of the Oregon Independent Living program was based on emphasizing six basic principles:

1. Independent living readiness services should be individualized and available to every eligible teenager in the state.
2. There should be maximum use of existing local private, community, and governmental agency services that can help prepare youths for independent living. Networking services within local communities and creating local ownership of this new service will be a key objective to gaining a permanent place for independent living readiness training in the existing delivery system.
3. The new program should be incorporated into the agency (CSD) service delivery system in ways that minimize disruption or cause new procedural requirements.
4. There should be local service authorization of grant expenditures for allowable services based on standard program guidelines. The focus should be on preserving fiscal stewardship while minimizing processing road blocks that could delay giving needed services.
5. There should be training opportunities, in relation to preparing teenagers for independent living, available to out-of-home care providers and agency staff.
6. Local CSD staff should be encouraged to be creative, within the bounds of procedural and program requirements, in finding ways to prepare teenagers and to leverage existing IV-E funds to serve more teenagers.

With these six principles in mind, Oregon established an overall state policy to guide local spending and service requirements.

Maximum program and expenditure control were placed with local branch managers so services could be developed and tailored to unique local needs. Local assumption of IV-E Independent Living program management has been a gradual process, away from centralized control.

Case record keeping was set up to be maintained in each local office and to use existing payment procedures. This approach reduced complications of local staff needing to learn additional procedural and payment systems.

A Central Grant Budget is maintained and expenditures are monitored statewide, but a spending cap for each region of the state was established based on the number of eligible youths in each area. Branch managers have direct authority to spend grand funds so long as the expenditure meets policy requirements and is within their regional cap.

Overall grant management and coordination are a centralized function, but CSD continues to move more control to the local level each year. An example is that this fiscal year, training for foster parents and staff working with teenagers is being moved to regional control and folded in with other professional training. Also this year, purchase of training materials used to benefit foster teenagers can be authorized at the regional/branch level.

Computer data reports have been developed which are sent to local branch offices each month to aid in local program management.

- One report gives detailed information about each eligible youth, such as whether services are being given and how long they are eligible, etc.
- Another data report give details about local spending.
- A third report gives an analysis of use compared to spending. This report shows: clients eligible, enrolled, served-to-date, rate of spending needed to balance the year, etc.

Plan and Community Facilitators

The CSD independent living program emphasizes the need for close local community development, and the intensive work associated with getting a youth's transition plan actualized. Thus, it makes it possible for branch managers to contract with private citizens to do much of the local and individual case plan development. These private citizens are known as Plan Facilitators" and "Community Facilitators," depending on the type of contract developed.

The following are excerpts from the CSD Client Services Manual detailing the development of facilitators:

Private Citizen Participation

Oregon's IV-E Independent Living program encourages local citizen participation and community networking of services that benefit older teenagers' transitions to adulthood.

Branch managers may contract directly with a private citizen to help promote this program, using either of two specially designed contracts, depending upon local need.

■ *A. Plan Facilitator*

A private citizen may be offered a contract to provide six to ten hours per month of day-to-day assistance, monitoring, and guidance to youths as they move toward completion of their independent living plan.

The plan facilitator works closely with CSD professional staff and others in the community who provide direction, training, and educational opportunities. A plan facilitator may provide services at any time after a youth has qualified for the program from an early assessment phase to the final completion of a service plan.

Plan facilitator services are individual client centered and are paid at a standard hourly rate.

Facilitator selection is from citizens in the local community who have been approved by the branch manager. The facilitator does not have casework responsibility or authority.

■ *B. Community Facilitator*

A private citizen under contract as a "Community Facilitator" is paid monthly, based upon a fixed hourly rate of $8 or $10 (depending upon work to be performed), for a negotiated number of hours of service.

Community facilitator services are not individual client-centered. Work to be performed emphasizes assisting CSD branch staff in the promotion, development, and maintenance of dynamic independent living readiness programs with the branch area.

The facilitator acts on behalf of the branch to promote community participation in the development of a comprehensive range of services in accordance with the contract. The facilitator does not have casework responsibility or authority.

As Plan Facilitator, the private citizen works with specified youths (like a "Big Brother" or "Big Sister") to help them achieve their independent living transition plans.

As Community Facilitator, the private citizen acts on behalf of the branch to link up and plan with other community agencies in development of major independent living readiness services that will benefit all youths making the transition.

The contracts are standardized throughout the state and applicants must be screened and meet eligibility requirements.

Contracting for a facilitator is strictly optional at the local level, depending on need.

Usually, only one Community Facilitator per branch is allowed and Plan Facilitators can only be contracted with to help youths with exceptional needs.

A Comprehensive Program

The Oregon plan emphasizes development of a comprehensive Independent Living Program within the state's foster care system. The Independent Living grant, therefore, supplements state efforts to comply with federal law requiring independent living readiness services for youths over 16 years of age and who reside in foster care. The Oregon basic plan is to provide:

■ *Individual readiness services to each youth based upon a written assessment of needs. HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS DO NOT POSE A BARRIER TO ELIGIBILITY FOR THIS SERVICE.*

In concert with local communities, services are provided by local private agencies, educational, or governmental vendors either through contract or direct purchase. These services include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Individual and group counseling,
- Development of daily living skills (full range) as needed,
- Educational and vocational development, and
- Work and career planning.

■ *Community Networking of Services*

Private citizens are encouraged to participate with state staff in developing community program support as well as the establishment of new services where necessary. There should be linkages at the community level of all essential services.

■ *Outreach and Community Participation is Promoted Statewide*

Local promotional activities include youths, local agencies, and private citizens.

Teenage newsletters are sent to all eligible youths each month.

Promotional posters and brochures are used statewide.

Local teen conferences, group workshops, and youth enrichment activities are being conducted within local communities that help prepare participating youths for independence and attract other eligible youths.

- ***Professional Training and Training Materials***

Grand funds supplement state general funds to allow training and resource materials to be available for foster care providers and CSD staff who help youths prepare for independent living.

The program is now in place throughout the state of Oregon and continues to grow and develop. With emphasis on local control and local creativity throughout the state, CSD is tapping into enthusiasm and good ideas that have just been waiting to be discovered. Oregon served over 1,200 teenagers last year with a wide array of unique experiences and services within their local communities.

Statewide Themes

Teen camps and conferences were conducted in several places in the state. One teen camp was reported on as follows:

"Racing down the wild rapids of the McKenzie, or guiding yourself over a rope bridge, were just a few of the activities teenagers participated in at the statewide camp. The camp, held in August 1990 at Lost Valley Center, just east of Eugene, was designed for teenagers 16-19 who resided in foster care. The camp was organized by IV-E Independent Living Facilitators from several parts of the state.

"This was the first time a group of private citizens assumed full responsibility to develop and organize an outing of this size for teenagers in state care.

"The objective of the camp was to help prepare teenagers for adulthood. In addition to physical activities, the 67 teenagers attending formed small groups and concentrated on self-esteem, self-awareness, learning to set personal goals, developing skills for daily living, and many other contemporary issues."

State/Community Partnerships

During 1990, using IV-E Independent Living Grant funds, CSD made possible the placement of foster teens from throughout Oregon in Portland's YWCA Emancipation Program. The "Y" has an innovative and successful program that is nationally recognized. An initial contract to serve five young women through the IV-E grant has grown so that it now provides 13 teens from all over Oregon with a place to live and the help they need to transition to self-sufficiency.

One Last Word About Facilitators

These private citizens are unique in the way they participate with local CSD offices around the state to promote needed independent living readiness services. The facilitator sometimes fills the role of big brother or big sister to a youth who is getting ready for independence. Most often, the facilitator acts on behalf of the Branch office to network with other community organizations and to help in the development of independent living readiness services for youths. These facilitators are proving to be of great value around the state of Oregon. They are a positive link between state and local services that benefit Oregon youths.

In Conclusion

To the end that this program becomes a regular, normalized, and required service for every Oregon teenager who must be placed in state foster care, it is hoped that local communities will assume program ownership and control and that the State Program Coordinator will be minimally needed. The Coordinator at this time exists to promote maximum benefits to the largest number of eligible youths and to encourage statewide development of a strong independent living component within the Oregon sub-care system.

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APPENDIX D

ACYF-PI-90-09: 4/19/90

hds
human
development
services

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children, Youth and Families

1. Log No. ACYF-PI-90-09
2. Issuance Date: 4/19/90
3. Originating Office: Children's Bureau
4. Key Word: Independent Living Initiative
Title IV-E and IV-B

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO Administrators of State Public Welfare Agencies Administering Title IV-E of the Social Security Act

SUBJECT Title IV-E and Title IV-B Requirements—Independent Living Initiatives Program

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES Sections 427, 470, 471(a)(16), 474 (a)(4), 475(1), 475(5)(C) and 477 of the Social Security Act; 45 CFR 1356.21(d)(3); and ACYF-PI-88-07, issued August 29, 1988.

BACKGROUND The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-272), through the addition of Section 477 to Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (SSA), provided payments to States for fiscal years 1987 and 1988 for service programs and activities to assist eligible children (age 16 and over) in Title IV-E foster care to make the transition from foster care to independent living.

In addition, P.L. 99-272 amended Section 470 to authorize funds for independent living programs under Title IV-E; added Section 474(a)(4) to include payments to States for transitional independent living programs; and amended Section 475(1) to include an independent living case plan requirement.

The Technical and Miscellaneous Revenue Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-647) in Section 8104(e), amended Section 475(5)(C) to assure that dispositional hearings for a child who has attained age 16 address the services needed to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to independent living and made certain other changes in Section 477. Effective November 10, 1988, States are permitted to provide Title IV-E independent living services to non-Title IV-E eligible youth over the age of 16 who are in foster care.

PURPOSE The purpose of this Program Instruction (PI) is to provide information and instruction to the States regarding: (1) the requirement for a written transitional independent living case plan for Title IV-E eligible children over the age of 16 and for all other children participating in the Independent Living (IL) program; (2) the requirement that dispositional hearings for a child who has attained age 16 address the services needed to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to independent living; and (3) the actions States must take with regard to eligibility for funds under Titles IV-E and IV-B (Section 427) of the Social Security Act.

As the States develop their Child Welfare State Plans (CWSP), we are also encouraging, but not requiring, that they describe the services being planned and provided for foster children age 16 and over who are in need of transitional independent living programs and services.

INFORMATION P.L. 99-272 amendments require that States make certain changes in the documentation of their Title IV-E State Plans in relation to the case plan requirements for chidlren age 16 or over. In addition, P.L. 99-272 and P.L. 100-647 amendments impact upon Section 427 eligibility.

P.L. 99-272 amendments affect Section 475(1) by adding the followng:

> Where appropriate, for a child age 16 or over, the case plan must also include a written description of the programs and services which will help such child prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living.

P.L. 100-647 amendments affect Section 475(5)(C) by adding the following to the dispositional hearing definition under procedural safeguards:

> and, in the case of a child who has attained age 16, the services needed to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to independent livng.

INSTRUCTION In order to continue to be eligible for Federal financial participation under Title IV-E and Title IV-B, the States must comply with the following statutory requirements:

(1) Title IV-E - State Plan Requirements

The State Plan requirement in Section 471(a)(16) for the development of a case plan for each child receiving foster care maintenance payments under Title IV-E is affected by reference to Section 475(1).

Section 475(1) has been amended to require that States include, where appropriate, a written description in the case plan of the programs and services which will help the child, age 16 or over, to prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living.

APPENDIX E

Federal Guidelines & Plan Development for Youth: PL 99-272

Federal guidelines as for "A written description of programs and services to help youth prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living." To meet the guidelines, staff can be given the following criteria for development of an independent living case plan for each youth age 16 and older:

Independent Living Plan Criteria

1. Anticipated age at discharge.
2. Amount of time available to transition youth.
3. Anticipated location/situation youth will transition to.
4. Description of assessment, process, tools, and methods used to determine services.
5. Listing of services:
    - rationale for offering
    - description of service
    - time frames
    - expected outcomes

Examples of services that could be offered to youth are:

- Life skills assessment
- Life skills instruction
- Vocational/educational assessment
- Tutoring
- Vocational training
- Job training/placement
- Counseling focused on independent living.

Example

The following is an example of how the guidelines would look as a "Transition to Independent living section" of a child welfare case plan:

- ***Tommie, age 16***

1. Anticipated age of transition: 18
2. Amount of time available to transition: 2 years
3. Location/situation upon transition: Remain in Honolulu
4. Description of assessment process and tools: Examples are: *Life Skills Inventory* and *Strength/Needs Assessment*, completed at age 16 and at follow-up intervals.
5. Services:

    A. Participation in Newtown Group Home skills training for:

    - Daily living skills,
    - Money management,
    - Legal rights and responsibilities, and
    - Housing.
    - Program beginning 9/90
    - Program ending 11/90
    - **Outcomes:** Intermediate level of functioning on LSI in 8 areas.

    B. Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation Services for vocational assessment.

    - Referral 3/90
    - **Outcomes:** Appropriate vocational referral.

    C. Training in house maintenance and cooking by foster parent, Mrs. Jones.

    - Program beginning 9/90
    - Program ending 6/91 (utilizing *Life Skills Inventory*).
    - **Outcomes:** Intermediate level of functioning on LSI in 2 areas.

    D. Counseling by Social Worker B. Schmidt on working towards transition. (Utilizing *Strength/Needs Assessment*)

    - Beginning 2/90
    - Ending upon attaining 18 years of age
    - **Outcomes:** Development of support network for before and after transition.

Emphasis should be put on the "new" federal requirement that each youth 16 and older must have a copy of his/her IL plan.

APPENDIX F

Youth Application: Short Form

SECTION A-3:

Youth Application:
Independent Living Program — Short Form

Name ____

Age ______________ Grade __________

Employed? Yes____ No____

If yes, where, what position and how many hours per week?

____

____

____

1. Please briefly state why you would like to be in the independent living program?

2. Please briefly state what you hope to gain from the independent living program?

3. Please list three or more things that you like about yourself.

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Applications Assessment Packet

4. Please list three things about yourself that you feel need improvement and tell why.

5. What do you think you will do when you leave the program?

Youth Candidate____________________________ Date __________________

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APPENDIX G

Behavioral & Narrative Assessment of Youth After Entrance Into the AILP

- *Weekly Checklist #1*
- *Weekly Checklist #2*
- *Assessment for Independent Living*
- *Adolescent's Assessment of Progress*
- *Janis Field: Feelings of Inadequacy Scale*
- *Strengths/Needs Assessment*
- *Life Skills Inventory*

SECTION D:
Behavioral and Narrative Assessment of Youth After Entrance Into the ILP (Ongoing)

Section D includes instruments to record behavioral observations by line staffs, primary caregivers, mentors and volunteers, and the youths themselves. The recording can be maintained daily, weekly, monthly or at other predetermined time frames. The main thrust of this section is to encourage programs to monitor and evaluate youth skills development in an independent living program, much more closely then the normal case planning process of every six months.

If the monitoring can be spread around so that it is not just the child care worker or agency caseworker doing the assessments, there will be:

- greater opportunities to examine the progress which occurs in a program, and
- a sharing of the responsibilities of timely monitoring.

Thus, the focus is to get all members of the "team" involved in assessment. This "team" is basically composed of the agency social/case work or child caring staff, the primary caregiver(s), and the youth. A community person such as a volunteer, advocate, or mentor could also be included.

Section D starts with two check lists. First, Item D-1, *ILP Weekly Check List 1* is used for determining weekly progress of youths in the program. This check list uses a point system on whether or not youths have kept their apartment/room clean, attended school and work, kept scheduled appointments, met with their advocate/mentor, etc. A point total is kept and weekly progress is compared with previous weeks and used as a milestone for future weeks. The uses for this tool are many:

- to monitor weekly progress over a period of time,
- to set expectations of minimal positive or negative scores,
- to compare youths throughout the program, etc.

The monitoring can occur at the direct line level as well as at supervisory or administrative reviews.

ILP Weekly Check List 2 (D-2) is a variation of check list 1, but there is no attempt to quantify the results. Instead this check list is used on a weekly basis to look at three aspects:

- is the youth doing well with a task (excellent),
- is a task being completed satisfactorily, or
- is there a need for improvement.

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Variations of this type of checklist exist, but the main point is this type of tool must be readily available for review. This can be accomplished by tacking it on the bedroom wall, putting it on the "family" bulletin board, taping it to the refrigerator for the week, etc. The check list sets a tone that skills development will be taken seriously, monitored regularly, and viewed as part of the expected weekly household activities.

Item D-3 *Assessment for Independent Living* is another example of a type of monitoring/check list type system. There are two specific areas within this assessment instrument; Level of Supervision and Frequency of Performance. The instrument has a wide ranging scale for determining what level of supports are needed to assist youths in accomplishing certain tasks.

Item D-4 *Adolescent's Assessment of Progress on ILP Plan* develops a format for youths to monitor their own independent living plan progress. The tasks monitored will be based upon their contract(s) with the program staff, caregiver(s), mentors, etc. The key is to get the youths determination of how they are doing in respect to the established plan.

Items D-5 and 6 contain the *Janis-Field: Feelings of Inadequacy Scale and Score Sheet* which ascertains how youths feel about their level of interaction with others. The Scale would be administered at an initial point in time and re- administered at a later date to determine if there had been a change. This instrument utilizes a numeric score for determining changes in feelings over time. The instrument has not been standardized, so caution must be used in the interpretation of average changes. The Scale has been used successfully in the State of Minnesota's Children's Services Division projects in 1988 and 1989.

The *Strengths/Needs Assessment*, Items D-7 thru 9, is an assessment instrument that is designed to look at the total person. Directions for use of the Strengths/Needs Assessment are contained in Item D-7. Item D-8 contains the Strengths/Needs Worksheet, and D-9 lists sample guideline questions. This particular instrument has been used with much success in settings ranging from departments of social services, to foster family care, to child caring facilities, and correctional settings.

Item D-10 *Life Skills Inventory* is a tool used to measure youths independent living program progress and to provide guidelines for skill instruction. It will also assist staff in recognizing the levels of difficulty within the different skills areas and developing an understanding that teaching requires tasks be broken down into small manageable steps.

The *Life Skills Inventory* can be administered by staff, primary caregivers, or anyone who is working on skills development with youths. Youths, after reviewing the scale have made statements such as; "I didn't realize I needed to know all of this to be independent," "I am glad I know this now before I leave care," "I am excited about learning some of these things."

The Inventory was originally developed for use with refugee families relocating to the United States. It has been adapted and revised many times for use with youths in out-of-home care. Its value not only lies in serving as a tool to keep track of the skills that a youth has learned but also as a guide for staff.

Because there are so many skill areas to cover with youths as they plan to move, it is easy to overlook a skill area or miss a part of a skill area. By using the Life Skills Inventory as a guide it will help to ensure a greater degree of uniformity in what is being taught or talked about from one out-of-home care setting to another.

The Life Skills Inventory appears to be a large, cumbersome document, but it does not have to be used in its entirety; nor in one sitting. One topic may be selected at a time. The focus would then be on completing the tasks on that topic before moving on to another.

There are four skills levels within the Inventory; Minimal, Intermediate, Adequate and Exceptional. The levels are intended to show movement or progress. The level of greatest significance is Adequate. Youths usually will need to show competence in most skills up to and including the Adequate skill level to be comfortable in an independent living situation.

The scoring of the Inventory is based on giving youths credit for being able to perform a skill in a certain area. Before youths are given credit for skills within a area, they should be able to demonstrate the skill. Therefore, the question becomes what must they do in order to prove to you that they have obtained the skill: e.g., knows the value of currency — the youth can make change, correctly name the coins and paper money, produce the correct change for a purchase at the store, etc.).

What the youths must do to demonstrate the skill must be standardized within the program. There must be agreement among all program personnel on this point, otherwise there may be a differing requirements from one youth to another in the process of completing the Inventory skill areas. A second aspect is that when the skill is mastered the relative section of the Inventory should be initialed and dated by the monitoring person(s).

The Life Skills Inventory is being utilized by many programs throughout the United States. Some programs have formed youth advisory groups to assist in modifying or adding sections. This allows for youths input in creating a complete and overall enhancement of the tool and a better fit for their programs.

The final Item, D-11, *Case Plan*, is a fairly straightforward look at creating a standardized format for an independent living case plan. The ***key*** concept in the case plan, as presented, is the inclusion at the end of the document of places for ***all*** plan participants to sign. This includes the youth, program line staff person(s), primary caretaker(s) and biological parent if appropriate. The concept of getting everyone involved and committed is a theme of the entire *Assessment Packet* and this is another example of where formalization of that process can occur.

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SECTION D-1:

Independent Living Program Weekly Check List #1

Name ______________________ Week Ending ______________

Weekly Total: ______________________

Previous Week Total ______________________

Weekly Progress
(one point for each item)

Positive Progress (Plus 1 point)	**Negative Progress (Minus 1 point)**
____ Apartment/Room Clean	____ Apartment/Room Not Clean
____ No School Absences	____ 1 or more absences
____ No tardiness	____ Tardy 1 or more times
____ Good work attendance	____ Poor work attendance
____ Group attendance	____ Skipped group
____ Good group participation	____ Poor group participation
____ Worked on workbook	____ No workbook progress
____ Looked for a job	____ Did not look for a job
____ No complaints from landlord	____ Complaint from landlord
____ Good peer relations	____ Poor peer relations
____ Volunteer work	____ No constructive activities
____ Kept appointments	____ Missed an appointment
____ Cleaned up after group	____ Lied to staff
____ Met with advocate	____ Missed meeting with advocate
____ Good report from teacher	____ Poor report from teacher
____ ______________	____ ______________
____ ______________	____ ______________
____ Total	____ Total

This check list was adapted from New Life Youth Services, ILP, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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SECTION D-2:

Independent Living Program Weekly Check List #2

Name ______________________ Date ____________

Vocational

Working ______
Job schedule ______

Looking for work (if unemployed) ______
Satisfactory job report ______

Financial

Savings ______

Payment of bills ______

Educational

Tardiness ______
School work ______
Suspended ______

Progress report ______
Passing grades ______
Study time ______

House-Management

Food preparation ______
Food and drink ______
Food cleanup ______
Dating rules ______
Laundry ______
Trips ______
Room Chores ______

Church ______
Daily chores ______
Room Time ______
Curfew ______
Phone ______
Whereabouts ______
Quiet time ______

Personal & Social

Hygiene ______
Group meeting. ______
Individual meetings ______
Cooperation ______
Attitude ______

Code

1= Needs Improvement
2= Satisfactory
3= Excellent
NA= Not Applicable

Comments: ______________________________

This material is adapted from the Crossnore School Independent Living Program, Crossnore, NC

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SECTION D-3:

Assessment for Independent Living*

PART I: Level of Supervision

This instrument is intended as a tool for assessment of a teenager's progress toward, or readiness for, independent living.

This section deals with *level of supervision*, and should be used with life skills A-E, which appear on the following page.

Key	Definition
A	**Assistance:** Needs concrete aid in performing task.
1-1	**One-to-One:** Needs continual supervision for emotional support and/or verbal guidance to complete task.
P	**Periodic Help:** Needs encouragement and verbal guidance part of the time while attempting to perform task.
R	**Reminder:** Needs periodic reminder that task needs to be done before it is performed.
I	**Improvement:** Can handle task only with difficulty and needs to improve.
C	**Clarification:** Understands partially and needs clarification.
U	**Understands Fully.**
T	**Teaching** of task needed.
CM	**Complete Mastery** of skill has been attained.
NR	**No Reminder** is necessary, performs tasks as needed.
NA	**Not Applicable.**

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*This material was developed by the School of Social Welfare, State University of New York, Center at Stony Brook, 1982.

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SECTION D-3:

Assessment for Independent Living: Level of Supervision

Life Skills Areas A Through F: PART II: FREQUENCY OF PERFORMANCE*

A. Personal Care

___ Bathing, mouth care
___ Use of deodorant
___ Grooming
___ Change/choose clothing
___ Care of clothing (washing, pressing, mending, etc.)

B. Care of Home

___ Sweeping/vacuuming/scrubbing floors
___ Washing windows
___ Cleaning walls, appliances, counters
___ Cleaning out/defrosting refrigerator
___ Cleaning bathtub/shower
___ Emptying garbage
___ Tidying the home
___ Use of basic maintenance tools

C. Food Preparation

___ Planning varied & balanced meals
___ Shopping
___ Reading directions/instructions
___ Preparing meals
___ Setting/clearing dishes

D. Handling Finances

___ Budgeting
___ Managing bank account
___ Keeping records
___ Spending money sensibly
___ Understands & uses credit responsibly
___ Understands insurance system

E. Utilization of Community Systems & Services

___ Understands transportation systems
___ Participates in recreational activities
___ Understands use of health services
___ Has knowledge of helping agencies and services
___ Knowledgeable about housing: locating, negotiating leases, etc.

F.Training & Employment

___ Recognizes own job aptitude & interest
___ Demonstrates realistic work attitudes
___ Shows realistic perception of training needs
___ Understands functions of career/trade
___ Can locate & use training facilities
___ Locating employment
___ Resume writing
___ Completing job applications
___ Prepared for job interviews

Comments: ____
____
____

---

*School of Social Welfare, SUNY at Stony Brook.

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PART II: FREQUENCY OF PERFORMANCE

This section deals with the frequency of performance and should be used with Life Area Skills G, below.

Key	Definition
S	**Sometimes:** The action is taken periodically but not predominantly.
O	**Often:** A dominant action but not constant.
A	**Always:** A constant action.
P	**Never:** A void of action at all times.

LIFE SKILLS AREA "G"

G. Social & Interpersonal Skills

______ Initiates contact with others.
______ Responds to being sought out.
______ Does not mislead others.
______ Is not misled by others.
______ Regulates impulses.
______ Demonstrates manners.
______ Recognizes and responds appropriately to authority figures.
______ Respects rights of others.
______ Helpful to others.
______ Uses appropriate language.
______ Participates comfortably in group activities.
______ Assumes and discharges responsibilities in group activities.

Comments: ______________________________

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*School of Social Welfare, SUNY at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York, 1984.

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SECTION D-4:

Adolescent's Assessment of Progress on Independent Living Case Plan

Report For ____________, 19__

Name ________________________________ Age________

Residence/Address ________________________________

Telephone # ________________________________

Brief Summary of Activities & Progress on Contract:

Education & Training________________________________

____

Medical Appointments ________________________________

____

Job Progress________________________________

____

Scrapbook Progress

1. Family Materials________________________________

____

2. Records ________________________________

____

Money Management ________________________________

____

Social Relationships and Activities ________________________________

____

Other Tasks ________________________________

____

Other Comments ________________________________

____

____

Signature ________________________ Date ______________

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SECTION D-5:

Janis Field: Feelings of Inadequacy Scale

Instructions: Read the sentences below and mark an "X" in the box that best describes you.

	very often	fairly often	sometimes	once in a great while	practically never
1. How often do you worry about whether other people like to be with you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. How often do you feel sure of yourself among strangers?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. How often do you feel confident that someday people you know will look up to you and respect you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. How often do you feel self-conscious?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. How often do you feel that you have handled yourself well at a party?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. How often are you comfortable when starting a conversation with people whom you do not know?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. How often are you troubled with shyness?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. When you speak in a class discussion, how often do you feel sure of yourself?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. When you have to talk in front of a class or group of people of your own age, how often are you pleased with your own performance?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. How often do you worry about how well you get along with other people?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This scale was adapted from *Manual for Living Skill Training In A Group*. Children's Services Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services, 1988. Janis-Field Instrument from Dan Conrad and Diane Hedin. *Instruments and Scoring Guide of Experiential Education Evaluation Project*. St. Paul: Center for Youth Development and Research, University of Minnesota, 1981.

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SECTION D-6:

Janis Field: Feelings of Inadequacy Scale (Score Sheet)

Instructions: Read the sentences below and mark an "X" in the box that best describes you.

	very often	fairly often	sometimes	once in a great while	practically never
1. How often do you worry about whether other people like to be with you?	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
2. How often do you feel sure of yourself among strangers?	[5]	[4]	[3]	[2]	[1]
3. How often do you feel confident that someday people you know will look up to you and respect you?	[5]	[4]	[3]	[2]	[1]
4. How often do you feel self-conscious?	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
5. How often do you feel that you have handled yourself well at a party?	[5]	[4]	[3]	[2]	[1]
6. How often are you comfortable when starting a conversation w/people whom you do not know?	[5]	[4]	[3]	[2]	[1]
7. How often are you troubled with shyness?	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
8. When you speak in a class discussion, how often do you feel sure of yourself?	[5]	[4]	[3]	[2]	[1]
9. When you have to talk in front of a class or group of people of your own age, how often are you pleased with your own performance?	[5]	[4]	[3]	[2]	[1]
10. How often do you worry about how well you get along with other people?	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

This scale was adapted from *Manual for Living Skill Training In A Group*. Children's Services Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services, 1988. Janis-Field Instrument from Dan Conrad and Diane Hedin, *Instruments and Scoring Guide of Experiential Education Evaluation Project*. St. Paul: Center for Youth Development and Research, University of Minnesota, 1981.

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Explanation of Janis Field Scoring Key

Scoring Key:

- 5 = HIGHEST, 1 = LOWEST
- Scores (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) are in the box for each individual item.
- First have youth answer questions
- Total Score for Scale. (Using score sheet.)
- This becomes a base-line score for future scoring of the scale.
- Progress can be determined by future scores.

---

* This test has not been standardized and caution should be taken on interpretation of the scores.

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SECTION D-7:

Strengths/Needs Assessment -- Directions

Whenever possible a good assessment (instrument) should do the following:

- 1. Be completed with the youth present.
- 2. Help the youth gain an understanding of his/her strengths and needs.
- 3. Help increase the youth's self-esteem.
- 4. Guide the youth in determining personal goals.
- 5. Provide a foundation for developing a personal plan.
- 6. Help youth with problem solving.

The place to begin is with a tool like the *Strengths/Needs Assessment* that engages the youth in the assessment process. The best way to motivate a youth to participate in learning the skills is to start with a skill that the youth is most interested in learning. The way to find out which skills the youth already has and the one(s) that he/she is interested in learning is to involve the youth in the assessment process.

The *Strengths/ Needs Assessment* is different from many assessment instruments in that it looks at the total person, and it refers to "needs" instead of "problems." Both points are significant. In order to help a young person begin to prepare for IL, they must have a good grasp of their capabilities in all aspects of their lives, including special interests. In fact, the place to start with a youth may be in helping him/her meet a need identified in the special interests category.

The difference between the terms, "needs" and "problems", may seem minor at first. But, everyone has needs and, for that reason, it is easier and more positive to talk about needs. On the other hand, the term "problems" is negative and implies that something about us is wrong. It is harder to talk about the things that ourselves and others perceive as wrong.

Guideline Questions

Most people find that they have to tailor the Strength/Needs guideline questions to fit agency settings and their personal style of communication. The quideline questions are, just that, intended to serve as a suggested outline of what to ask in an interview with youth. The questions can be modified with little difficulty and most people find that completing a S/N assessment is a positive experience.

The S/N Assessment has been used extensively in the field of human services. The instrument is just one part of a goal-planning process outlined by Drs. Peter Houts and Robert Scott. It has been used effectively with adults and youth who are clients of mental health agencies, correctional facilities, rehabilitation agencies, veteran's and

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community hospitals. The S/N Assessment is a good way to actively involve the client from the beginning and thus, guaranteeing a greater degree of client involvement and commitment.

When completing a S/N Assessment, always start with the Special Interests category. The questions in this section are less threatening and set the tone for the rest of the interview.

Use short one word recordings on the S/N form whenever possible. As long as the notations are understandable to you and your young person that's all that counts.

If the young person has difficulty identifying strengths or needs in a particular area, give feedback. Point out those strengths and needs that you have observed (at least to this point in time). Ask if he/she would agree with your observations. It is important that the information recorded on the form accurately describe how the youth sees him/herself not how you see the youth.

When the interview is finished, review the completed S/N form with the youth to make sure the information is correct. Be sure to give the youth a copy of the completed form to take with him/her. Use carbon paper if necessary. Start case planning and possible skills development by asking the youth to identify the two most important "Need" areas that he/she would be most interested in working on.

When using the following pages as a "guide" remember that all that is needed is a blank sheet of paper. By drawing a line down the center of the sheet of paper a S/N assessment form is created.

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SECTION D-8:

Strengths/Needs Assessment Form

Youth's Name ______________________________

Date ______ ______

Strengths		*Needs*
	Special Interest	
	Social/Personal	
	Family/Friends	
	Religion & Values	

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Behavioral and Narrative Assessment After Entrance **Assessment Packet**

Strengths		*Needs*
	Education & Occupation	
	Emotional, Mental, Cognitive	
	Physical Condition	
	Support Systems	
	Other	

From Robert Scott & Peter Houts, *Individualized Goal Planning With Families In Social Services*, 1978.

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SECTION D-9:

Sample Guideline Questions

Strengths	*Needs*
(What the participant can do, what he/she likes to do and people who are willing to help the participant attain goals.)	(State these positively -- What the participant wants to be doing.)
1. Special Interests and Activities	
How do you spend your free time?	What would you like to do in your free time?
Do (did) you have any hobbies?	Are there any hobbies or crafts you would like to learn?
What clubs or organizations do you belong to?	Is there something else you would like to learn for fun?
What do you like to do on your vacation?	Are there any hobbies or activities you would like to do more?
Do you play any sports?	Do staff or others see any needs?
Do you play a musical instrument?	Do staff or others know of any strengths here?
2. Social/Personal	
How would you describe yourself to others?	Is there anything you would like to change about your personality?
What one thing do you like best about yourself?	Is there anything you would like to change about the way you present yourself to others?
3. Family and Friends	
Who do you call family?	What changes would you like to make with your family?
Are you currently living with a family?	What needs to be improved?
Who are your friends?	Would you like different kinds of friends?
In what ways are you a good friend to others?	Is there anything that your family or friends should do for you now?
What friends would you call for help?	What does your family or agency want to see change?
4. Religion, Values, Beliefs	
How does religion play a part in your life?	Would you like to go to religious activities more or talk with a priest, minister, or rabbi?
What do you do that helps others?	What would help you practice those things you believe in?
What do you believe in?	Who is your ideal person?
What would you have to change in order to be more like your ideal person?	Do you have a personal philosophy or motto?

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5. Education and Occupation

What do you like most about school?

What schooling do you have?
What are your best subjects?

What jobs have you held?
What does the employer or staff recognize as needs?

Is there more training or schooling that you would like?
What work would you like to do?
Is there something connected with your work that you would like to do more?
What part of your job did you like best?

6. Emotional, Mental, Cognitive

When can you think most clearly?
When are you in the best mood?

What makes you feel happy?

What could improve your attitude?
How can you change your own mood or attitude?

What would help you to think more clearly?
What kinds of things could be done to make you feel happier?
How would you describe your attitude in general?
How do you best work your problems out?
When you are feeling down, what is your best time of day?

7. Physical Condition

Physically, what can you do best?

How would you rate your physical health?
When do you feel physically best?
When was your last physical exam?

When was your last dental check-up?

What could be done so you would feel better?
Are you receiving any regular treatment?
Do you have any nutritional needs?
What would help you to be stronger and healthier?

8. Support Systems/Reaction to Professional Services

What is your source of income?

What persons, agencies, etc., do you rely on for support?
What do you like about the way you are treated by the agency?
What staff have helped you most?

How could things be improved for you here?
What could staff do more to help you?

What do you think is your primary reason for being here?

9. Other

(This category is for observations and questions which do not fit into other categories.)

What are you most proud of having accomplished?
What skills do you have that will help you live on your own?

In five years, what would you like to say you have accomplished?
What do you need to do to prepare for independence?

From Robert Scott and Peter Houts, *Individualized Goal Planning with Families*, in *Social Services* 1978.

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SECTION D-10:

Life Skills Inventory Cover Sheet

Name of Youth: ____________________

Date of Birth: __________

Person(s) involved in life skills assessment and dates of assessment:

____________________ __________
____________________ __________
____________________ __________
____________________ __________
____________________ __________

Category	*Date Skill Level Attained*			
	BAS.	INT.	ADQ.	EXCEP.
A. Money Management/Consumer Awareness	____	____	____	____
B. Food Management	____	____	____	____
C. Personal Appearance and Hygiene	____	____	____	____
D. Health	____	____	____	____
E. Housekeeping	____	____	____	____
F. Housing	____	____	____	____
G. Transportation	____	____	____	____
H. Educational Planning	____	____	____	____
I. Job Seeking Skills	____	____	____	____
J. Job Maintenance Skills	____	____	____	____
K. Emergency and Safety Skills	____	____	____	____
L. Knowledge of Community Resources	____	____	____	____
M. Interpersonal Skills	____	____	____	____
N. Legal Skills	____	____	____	____

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Category A:

Money Management and Consumer Awareness

Basic

____ Knows values of coins and currency.
____ Can make a transaction at a local store and count change.
____ Has an understanding of the difference between "luxuries" and "necessities" in food, transportation, clothing, housing, etc.
____ Understands the difference between "sale price" and "regular price."
____ Knows how to clip and use coupons.

Intermediate

____ Can open a checking or saving account.
____ Can write checks/ make withdrawals and make deposits.
____ Can record banking transactions (either checking or savings).
____ Can budget allowance to last for a week. (Shows some understanding of the concept of saving.)
____ Understands the difference between gross wage and take home pay.
____ Can use a calculator to add, subtract, divide and multiple.

Adequate

____ With assistance can make out monthly budget covering regular expenses for independent living.
____ Shows some "sales resistance" to "something for nothing" advertising and "low weekly payment" credit plans.
____ Can read monthly bank statements, compare balances, make adjustments as necessary (deduct service charges, check fees, adjust for differences in the balance).
____ Can comparison shop using unit pricing information.
____ Understands the responsibility of filing a federal and state tax form. Knows the information that is required for filing taxes and knows where to go to get assistance in filing taxes.

Exceptional

____ Budgets for unanticipated emergencies, seasonal bills, etc.
____ Understands buying on credit, loans, interest and late payment penalties.
____ Understands payroll deductions, taxes, FICA, insurance.
____ Understands what a good credit rating is, how it can be obtained and maintained.
____ Can complete a short tax form.
____ Can balance a checkbook.
____ Has regular savings program.

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Category B:

Food Management

Basic

_____ Can order in a cafeteria or fast food restaurant.
_____ Can set the table properly.
_____ Knows name and use of cooking utensils.

Intermediate

_____ Can order a meal from the menu in a family-style restaurant.
_____ Can fix a breakfast for one.
_____ Can fix a lunch for one.
_____ Can fix a dinner for one.
_____ Can make out a grocery shopping list.
_____ Can carry out a grocery shopping trip. (Selecting items on the shopping and paying the cashier.)
_____ Can use cooking utensils effectively and safely (knives, grater, can opener, potato peeler, egg beater, etc.).
_____ Can use kitchen appliances effectively and safely.

Adequate

_____ Stores perishable items under refrigeration.
_____ Recognizes signs of spoilage in food.
_____ Can follow the instructions for preparing canned or frozen foods.
_____ Can use acceptable table manners.
_____ Can plan weekly menu of nutritious meals.
_____ Can shop for a week's menu and stay within a food budget.
_____ Can prepare all meals on a week's menu.

Exceptional

_____ Can follow recipes from a cookbook.
_____ Can adjust recipes to feed more or less people that called for in the recipes.
_____ Understands how to use dates on food packages to prevent spoilage.
_____ Takes advantage of specials, seasonal produce, coupons, farmers markets, etc.
_____ Understands and can use unit pricing to comparison shop.

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Category C:

Personal Appearance and Hygiene

Basic

____ Can dress self (including underwear, socks, and tied shoes) in a reasonably acceptable fashion.
____ Can bathe self.
____ Knows how to use soap, shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream and other common personal products appropriate to sex.

Intermediate

____ Showers or bathes regularly.
____ Brushes teeth regularly.
____ Keeps hair clean and neat.
____ Dresses in reasonably clean clothing.

Adequate

____ Can read clothing labels and determine which clothes are to be dry cleaned, hand washed and machine washed.
____ Can sort and machine wash clothes at a laundromat using appropriate temperatures, amounts of soap, bleach, etc.
____ Can dry clothes in a dryer using appropriate settings.
____ Knows approximate cost of dry cleaning and can arrange for dry cleaning.
____ Can hand wash items following the instructions on the label.
____ Can iron clothes.
____ Can sew on button and make minor clothing repairs.

Exceptional

____ Knows the cost of and can budget money for special hair and nail care. (i.e., permanents, braiding, manicures, etc.)
____ Knows appropriate clothing to wear for almost all occasions.

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Category D:

Health

Basic

_____ Can open child-proof container.
_____ Knows not to take someone else's medication.
_____ Knows that drugs, alcohol and tobacco may be harmful to your health.
_____ Knows parts of the body and sexual functioning.
_____ Knows how pregnancy occurs.

Intermediate

_____ Can recognize and describe symptoms of colds, flu and other common health problems.
_____ Knows how to get emergency health care.
_____ Knows what to do for a minor cut, a minor burn, a splinter.
_____ Understands the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
_____ Understands the risks of drug and alcohol abuse.

Adequate

_____ Can take own temperature using an oral thermometer.
_____ Can nurse self through cold or flu.
_____ Recognizes and makes correct use of "over the counter" drugs for pain, stomach upset, diarrhea, fever, cold/allergy symptoms.
_____ Can call a doctor or dentist and schedule an appointment.
_____ Can read a prescription label correctly and follow the instructions.
_____ Can take medication without supervision.
_____ Knows how to dispose of drugs in a safe manner.
_____ Knows how to use what is included in a First Aid Kit.
_____ Has a copy of personal immunization records and medical history.
_____ Knows methods of birth control and how to obtain birth control devices.
_____ Knows how to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
_____ Has selected a doctor, dentist or clinic for regular health care.

Exceptional

_____ Is conscious of diet, exercise, good eating habits and other preventative health measures.
_____ Can determine when to go to an emergency room and when to make an appointment with the family doctor or clinic.
_____ Understands the importance of medical insurance and how to obtain it.

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Category E:

Housekeeping

Basic

____ Can wash dishes adequately using soap and hot water.
____ Can change a light bulb.
____ Can make bed.
____ Knows how to sweep floor and stairs, wash wood and linoleum floors, wash windows, dust, polish furniture, clean toilet, clean bath tub and sink.
____ Knows appropriate cleaning products to use for different cleaning jobs.
____ Knows how to dispose of garbage.

Intermediate

____ Can use vacuum cleaner properly and change bags.
____ Can change bed linen.
____ Knows how to prevent sinks and toilets from clogging.

Adequate

____ Knows how to stop a toilet from running.
____ Knows how to use a plunger to unstop a toilet or sink.
____ Can defrost the refrigerator, if necessary.
____ Can clean a stove.
____ Knows what repairs a landlord should perform.
____ Knows how to conserve energy and water.

Exceptional

____ Perform routine house-cleaning to maintain the home in a reasonably clean state.
____ Uses drawers and closets appropriately for storage.
____ Can do minor household repairs.
____ Is able to contact the landlord and request repairs.
____ Can change a fuse or reset a circuit breaker.
____ Can measure a window for shades or curtains.
____ Knows how to get rid of and avoid roaches, ants, mice, etc.

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Category F:

Housing

Basic

____ Understands the concept of renting and knows the role of a landlord.

Intermediate

____ Can read want ads for vacancies.
____ Understands basic terms (lease, sub-let, utilities, studio, efficiency, security deposit, reference, etc.).
____ Can calculate the costs associated with difference types of housing.

Adequate

____ Can identify type of housing that is within budget and meets current housing needs.
____ Can calculate "start up" costs. (Utility deposits, connection fees, security deposit, first month's rent, purchase of furniture and all other household items.)
____ Can complete a rental application.
____ Can ask the landlord about apartment to determine if apartment meets needs.
____ Knows to inspect the apartment to make sure appliances work and that the landlord as supplied accurate information about the apartment and the neighborhood.
____ Shows some concerns for the rights of other residents with regard to property and noise.
____ Understands the implications if the rights of other residents are not respected.
____ Understands the implication of the security deposit.

Exceptional

____ Demonstrates the ability to get along with other residents and the landlord.
____ Knows how to get help if there is a conflict with the landlord.

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Category G:

Transportation

Basic

_____ Knows amount of money required for bus fare.
_____ Can make solitary trip on public transportation between two designated points.
_____ Can ride bicycle safely.
_____ Knows what is required to get a driver's license.

Intermediate

_____ Knows how to call a taxi and provide information needed. Knows the approximate cost of taking a taxi.
_____ If given instructions, can make public transportation journey involving several transfers.
_____ Can obtain monthly or student bus pass.

Adequate

_____ Can use information on public transportation routes to get to any location on public transportation system.
_____ Knows how to travel between cities by bus or train. (Knows how to obtain travel information, make reservations, purchase tickets, get to station, find train/bus,etc.)
_____ Can arrange routine transportation to work or school.

Exceptional

_____ Can read a map.
_____ Has a driver's license.
_____ Can give directions.
_____ Can fix bicycle.
_____ Knows how to do basic car maintenance.
_____ Can estimate cost of owning and operating a car for a month/ year.

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Assessment Packet

Behavioral and Narrative Assessment After Entrance

Category II:

Educational Planning

Basic

____ Has a realistic view of his/her chances for completing high school and/or seeking higher education.

Intermediate

____ If high school graduation is not realistic, understands what a GED is and how to obtain one.
____ Understands future prospects and probable living standards relative to specific levels of education and/or specialized skills.

Adequate

____ Can fill out forms to enroll in an educational program.
____ Has a general idea of what job he/she wants.
Has an appropriate educational plan for the job selected.
____ Understands educational/ skill requirements for job selected.
____ Can discuss educational/ vocational plans with teachers/ counselor.
____ Is aware of the cost of higher education/ vocational training.
____ Knows the difference between a loan and a grant.
____ Is aware of educational resources available in the community.

Exceptional

____ "Shops around" to find the best educational resources.
____ Knows where to find and how to access adult education or vocational training in the community.
____ Knows how to obtain financial aid/ scholarships for additional education.

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Category I:

Job Seeking Skills

Basic

____ Has reasonable idea of the types of jobs will be available to him/her.
____ Knows what the minimum wage is.

Intermediate

____ Can fill out a standard job application form.
____ Can read the want ads and find appropriate leads.
____ Can complete a mock interview giving appropriate answers to potential questions.

Adequate

____ Has a completed job application/ fact sheet to take on a job interview.
____ Can make appointment for a job interview.
____ Knows to prepare for a job interview.
____ Knows appropriate clothing to wear for the interview.
____ Can complete a job interview.
____ Knows the function of and can contact the public employment agency.
____ Knows the function of and can contact private employment agencies.
____ Understands that private employment agencies charge fees.
____ Can identify ads placed by private employment agencies.

Exceptional

____ Can write a resume.
____ Can follow up an interview with a letter.
____ Is able to maturely weigh the advantages of one job over another.
____ Understands legal discrimination and where to seek help if discriminated against illegally.

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Category J:

Job Maintenance Skills

Basic

____ Dresses for work appropriately.
____ Reports to work on time.
____ Knows job responsibilities and how to complete job tasks.

Intermediate

____ Knows how to read a pay stub.
____ Knows to contact employer when not able to go to work.
____ Knows what behaviors will get a person fired immediately.
____ Knows how to ask for help with a problem on the job.

Adequate

____ Knows if eligible for sick time, vacation time, or personal time.
____ Knows what a grievance procedure is.
____ Knows what to do to get a raise.
____ Knows when and when not to talk with co-workers.
____ Knows appropriate way to talk to supervisor.
____ Has a plan for handling anger when angry at supervisor, co-workers, or customers.

Exceptional

____ Can implement anger management plan in majority of cases.
____ Knows how to use company grievance procedure to resolve disagreements.
____ Knows companies "unwritten polices" and can function within them.
____ Knows how to ask for a raise.
____ Knows what to do to be eligible for promotion.
____ Knows legal rights as an employee.

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Category K:

Emergency and Safety Skills

Basic

_____ Knows functions of police, ambulance and fire department. Can reach each by calling the appropriate number
_____ Is trained to evacuate the residence in case of fire.
_____ Knows proper way of exposing of smoking materials, if smokes.
_____ Knows how to lock and unlock door and windows.

Intermediate

_____ Understands basic fire prevention. (No smoking in bed, using gas stove to heat, excessive use of extension cords, frayed electrical cords,etc.)
_____ Knows how to check smoke alarm and how to replace battery.
_____ Knows that improperly used appliances can cause fires.
_____ Can recognize the smell of a gas leak.
_____ Knows what to do, who to call if she/he smells a gas leak.

Adequate

_____ Knows how to use a fire extinquisher.
_____ Knows the different methods for putting out different kinds of fires.
_____ Knows how to properly store cleaning materials.
_____ Can usually determine when professional medical help is needed.

Exceptional

_____ Has completed First Aid training.
_____ Has completed CPR training.

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Category L:

Knowledge of Community Resources

Basic

_____ Knows location of nearest post office and how to use it.
_____ Knows how to get information by telephone.
_____ Knows where nearest park is located.
_____ Knows where nearest supermarket or shopping district is located.

Intermediate

_____ Knows where nearest laundromat is located.
_____ Knows where personal bank is located.
_____ Can use the yellow pages to obtain information.

Adequate

_____ Knows who to contact if lost , frightened, depressed, anxious, sick, injured, out of food and money, utilities disconnected, or heat goes out.
_____ Knows where and how to register for selective service.
_____ Knows where the nearest state employment office is located.
_____ Can obtain a copy of birth certificate and a duplicate social security card.

Exceptional

_____ Has awareness of "specialized" resources: mental health counseling, consumer counseling, VD clinics, student aid offices, tenant groups, animal control, public recreation, etc.
_____ Knows who elected representatives are and how to contact them.
_____ Has obtained a library card.
_____ Knows what the Better Business Bureau does and how to contact it.

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Category M:

Interpersonal Skills

Basic

____ Can respond to introductions and answer simple questions.
____ Can identify personal strengths and needs (with assistance if necessary).
____ Has "good" table manners. (Can use knife, fork, spoons, napkin appropriately.)

Intermediate

____ Looks others in the eye and shakes hands if other person offers.
____ Can make "small talk" (face to face).
____ Can make introductions, including approaching others to introduce self.
____ Can establish a realistic goal to meet an identified personal need. (with assistance if necessary)

Adequate

____ Accepts invitations from others to be involved in social activities.
____ Makes arrangements with peers for social activities.
____ Knows where to get help if unable to resolve interpersonal conflicts alone.
____ Has some ability to resolve conflicts with others.
____ Refrains from physical violence as a means of solving interpersonal conflict.
____ Has practiced (in role play or mock situation) how to say "no" to a peer who is trying to persuade him/her to do something wrong.
____ Can develop a realistic plan with appropriate steps identified to achieve goal.
____ Can carry out plan with some assistance provided.
____ Can describe the "best possible" outcome if the goal is achieved and the "worst possible" outcome if the goal is not achieved.
____ Can describe the relationship between actions and consequences.

Exceptional

____ Labels and expresses anger or other strong feelings appropriately, "talks out" problems rather than "acting them out."
____ Has demonstrated the ability to say "no" to peers.
____ Can develop and carry out a personal plan for goal achievement without constant supervision.
____ Can anticipate, with limited input from others, what consequences might be associated with different choices.
____ Knows when and how to send a written thank-you note.

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Category N:

Legal Issues

Basic

_____ Would have the phone number of someone to call if arrested or victimized.
_____ Understands generally what actions are against the law and what the consequences are.

Intermediate

_____ Knows rights of arrest.
_____ Knows what the function of a lawyer is.
_____ Knows legal age for buying alcohol and tobacco products.
_____ Understands the meaning of "legal age" in legal terms. (What you can do, what you cannot do.)
_____ Knows the legal requirements for marriage.

Adequate

_____ Knows responsibility for registering for selective service, if male.
_____ Aware of availability of free legal services
_____ Understands the consequences of signing a contract or a lease.
_____ Knows legal penalty for :
_____ Buying, possessing, selling and smoking marijuana and other drugs,
_____ Buying and drinking beer and alcohol underage,
_____ Trespassing,
_____ Shoplifting,
_____ Burglary,
_____ Possession of stolen property,
_____ Traffic violations.

Exceptional

_____ Shows good citizenship and an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen.
_____ Knows how and where to register to vote.
_____ Knows where to go to vote.
_____ Knows the difference between "felony," "misdemeanor," and "violation."

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APPENDIX H

Youth's Post-Program Satisfaction & Referring Agency Evaluation

SECTION E-2:

New Life Youth Services of Cincinnati, Ohio Uses the Following Set of Questions to Evaluate Youths' Post-Program Satisfaction

1. How well do you feel the ILP helped to prepare you for living on your own?

2. What did you learn while in the program?

3. What do you feel you did not learn while in the program?

4. Do you feel that you cooperated with the program staff?

5. Do you feel that the staff gave you enough supervision and support?

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6. What changes would you make in the program? (Please list)

7. Where did you go when you left the program?

8. What specific problems did you have when you left the program?

9. What things had you learned in the program that helped you after leaving?

10. What helped you most while in the program?

11. Any other comments, ideas, suggestions, or criticisms?

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SECTION E-3:

Referring Agency Social Worker Post-Program Evaluation of ILP

DISCHARGE EVALUATION :
To be completed by referring agency social/case worker.

Program Participant ______________________

Date of Discharge ________

Social/Case Worker ______________________

Date of Evaluation ________

1. Services Rendered:

Yes___ No___ Youth was assisted in finding decent, safe housing while in the ILP.
Yes___ No___ Furnishings for the youth's apartment were adequate.
Yes___ No___ Youth was assisted in enrolling in an appropriate educ/voc. program.
Yes___ No___ ILP staff monitored the youth's school/vocational progress.
Yes___ No___ ILP staff assisted youth in completing the life skills training program.
Yes___ No___ ILP staff met with youth weekly and documented progress and problems.
Yes___ No___ ILP staff assisted the youth in finding employment or monitored youth's existing work situation.
Yes___ No___ Youth has a certified copy of their birth certificate.
Yes___ No___ Youth has copy of Social Security card.
Yes___ No___ Youth has a savings and/or a checking account.
Yes___ No___ Youth received counseling or on-call services as needed.
Yes___ No___ ILP staff made timely referrals to community resources as needed.
Yes___ No___ ILP staff sent regular comprehensive reports on youth progress.

Is there anything that the ILP staff could have done differently that might have increased the progress of this youth?

____
____
____
____
____
____

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2. Client Growth:

Please use the following scale to score the items below:

O = No improvement   1 = A little improvement   2 = Moderate improvement

3 = A lot of improvement/client has no problems in this area

____ Ability to meet basic survival skills with minimal support.
____ Ability to take initiative in meeting needs.
____ Ability to support self financially.
____ Ability to ask for help in problematic situations.
____ Ability to manage own time.
____ Ability to set up and keep appointments.
____ Ability to find a job without staff help.
____ Ability tp hold a job.
____ Ability to function in an educational/vocational program.
____ Ability to develop an overall support network.
____ Ability to manage money.
____ Ability to manage apartment upkeep and general housekeeping.
____ Ability to utilize community services.
____ Ability to use public transportation.
____ Ability to take responsibility for own actions, planning, and overall life management.
____ Overall self-awareness.
____ Overall ability to express self verbally.
____ Overall personal hygiene.
____ Overall judgment concerning choice of friends.
____ Overall confidence in ability to function independently.
____ Overall ability to communicate during stressful situations.
____ Other areas of improvement – please list

____ **Total**

Yes___ No___ Youth avoided legal problems while in the program.
Yes___ No___ Youth was discharged according to time frame, not early termination.
Yes___ No___ Youth has a stable living arrangement.
Yes___ No___ Youth completed the life skills training program.
Yes___ No___ Youth completed or is in an appropriate educational/vocational program.

Any additional comments on this program participant's progress in the program:

____

____

____

____

____

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Appendix I

Brendan Associates Needs Assessment Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather information on perceptions of services available to youths in a particular service delivery area. In addition, the document asks for suggestions and comments that respondents have about the delivery of services to youths in out-of-home care. The questionnaires would be mailed to all agency staffs; Department of Social Services and private agency child welfare and residential child care staffs, foster parents, purchase of service providers, community representatives, and other interested parties.

In developing a report on the data gathered by using this instrument we try to detail the responses for each question and grouping of respondents. The example below is an outline of just such an effort:

Summary of Adolescent Independent Living Survey

During April of 1991, 612 questionnaires were mailed to all Department of Social Services Child Welfare staff, foster parents, purchase of service providers, community representatives, and other interested parties. The survey's purpose was to gather information on perceptions of services available to youths in the state. In addition, the document asked for suggestions and comments about the delivery of services to youths in out-of-home care.

The Survey

The survey was in question-and-answer format. The first section requested demographic data for respondents: name, agency, address, position title, and telephone number. Of 226 respondents, all but 10 completed this section. The second section asked 11 questions about respondents' present and anticipated contacts with DSS and other youths in out-of-home care, community resources, and mentors or volunteers. It also solicited perceptions of the most pressing difficulties facing youths exiting care and moving into their communities. A final question (#12) asked respondents to check any of four choices indicating their willingness to participate in independent living programming or follow-ups by our staff. The following summarizes responses to this final question.

- ***Would you be willing to participate in any of the following?***

78 (33%) Adolescent mentor program

79 (33%) Community independent living advisory board

86 (36%) Teaching of skills to adolescents

90 (38%) Follow-up contacts by Brendan Assoc. staff

26 (11%) Respondents checked all four items

(These also are counted in the individual items above.)

As of May 30, 1991, Brendan Associates has received 226 responses to the survey, or a 37 percent rate of return—an excellent level of response for a general survey mailing of this type. The following provides a further breakdown of survey respondents by locale:

County Office Staff	No. Sent	Returned (%)
County A	200	91 (45%)
County B	33	25 (76%)
County C	50	24 (48%)
County D	70	33 (47%)
Foster Parents (all counties)	232	26 (11%)
Community Groups & POS providers*	27	27 (100%)
Totals	**612 (100%)**	**226 (37%)**

(*Small numbers of additional surveys were distributed in this category; the exact number is unknown. Therefore, figures in this category are an approximation.)

Due to the limited time span of the project, we could not follow-up on non-returned surveys. A follow-up mailing would have increased the overall return rate.

The following summarizes and highlights respondents' reactions to each of the survey questions. We repeat that 60 percent of those surveyed did not respond. We believe the significance of this on our overall effort was minimal. The information contained in the surveys returned was similar in content to other data-gathering efforts. The balance of the report details initiatives beyond the surveys. Overall, we believe summarizing results of the 226 surveys is a reasonably accurate portrayal of out-of-home care activities in the State.

To be most useful, we have when possible grouped responses by county office or interest group, in three principal categories: community groups and purchase of service providers, DSS foster parents, and DSS staff.

Summary of Responses: POS Providers & Community Group Representatives (N=27)

The respondents in this group represented all counties. Most were from residential child-caring agencies, predominantly staff of group homes and shelters. This group was fairly knowledgeable about community resources that have the potential to provide support for expansion of programming. Still, a substantial number replied they were "unsure" about who could "assist" in the delivery of adolescent independent living services (see Question #5). Approximately 60 percent of these respondents checked (Question #12) one or more areas, indicating their willingness to participate in differing aspects of independent living programming in the future. Six respondents (22%) checked all four areas for future involvement.

#1 Do you presently work with adolescents?

- Yes (22) No (0)

#2 Do you foresee working with adolescents in custody of DHS?

- Yes (19) No (3)

#3 Do you consider present services for adolescents in the care and custody of the Department of Social Services (DSS) to be adequate?

- DSS programs are not adequate because the needs of these youths are changing
- Too dependent on individual social workers and caseloads
- DSS needs additional alternative living arrangements for youth
- There are too many limitations to foster family care
- Certain geographic locations are more limited than others, e.g., County X
- Poor overall planning for youths
- Few programs designed to meet the needs of adolescents
- Limited shelter or foster care space available
- Lack of formal counseling programs
- Need more group homes—short-term (1-3 mos.) and long-term (1 year)
- We need more counselors, people to drive them to NA/AA, independent living centers, places where they can hang out that are fun
- There has not been adequate preparation and/or planning for the child for independent living and adult responsibilities
- Youth "under-referred" to community programs

#4 What "new" or additional adolescent services would you like to see offered?

- Life skills education/pre-independent living skill building
- Independent living programs
- Adolescent groups to deal with building self-esteem and confidence. Also, motivation groups and related activities
- Transition programs/apartment programs (supervised and unstaffed)
- Follow-up services after discharge
- Peer-counseling
- In-patient adolescent substance abuse, psychiatric facilities
- Local business work programs
- Respite care for primary caregivers
- Services to youths ages 18-22
- Outreach services by private, non-profit organizations
- Parenting services/teen mother programs
- Remedial education programs for drop-out youths
- Big Brother/Sisters programs
- Comprehensive, intensive, culturally sensitive services

#5 Are there community organizations or agencies in your area that could assist in the delivery of adolescent independent living services?

- Many replied "unsure," or left this question blank.
- University of XX
- County Economic Opportunity
- Community College
- State Employment Office and Job Corps
- Family and Youth Services
- Volunteers
- Child and Family Services
- University of XX Extension
- Alternatives to Violence
- Civic Organizations—Masons, Elks, American Legion, hotel associations, etc.
- Teen Network
- Central Youth Services
- Storefront School—academic needs
- Center for Independent Living (handicapped program)
- Churches

#6 Are there local businesses or private sector organizations in your area that are presently providing adolescent services, school incentives, etc., for youth?

- After-school services for youths.
- Summer youth employment programs.
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- State Employment Office
- Teen Network
- Medical Group
- Parents Anonymous
- Beach Hotel
- Churches

- Community Foundation

#7 Are there community organizations or agencies that could be utilized to develop adolescent services in your geographic area?

- These ideas are best served in a consortium between public and private
- Parks and Recreation departments
- Community Centers
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Rotary, Lions, Elks, Kiwanis
- Hotel Associations
- Community Associations (e.g., Sunrise Community Association)
- Churches
- University of XX
- Salvation Army
- Jaycees
- Coast Community Mental & Comprehensive Health & Adolescent Health Network
- Parents & Children Together

#8 Are there businesses or private interests in your geographic area that might be receptive to helping to develop adolescent services in the community?

- If businesses can gain some exposure or benefits, there is a chance they'll support some programs for youths
- Hotel Industry
- Local businesses (health clubs, etc.)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Hotel and Tourism Industries
- Catholic Charities
- 700 Club
- Junior League

#9 Are there mentor programs for adolescents in your area?

- Yes (6) No (14)
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Family Support
- YWCA
- Child and Family Services
- Alateen
- Youth At Risk
- Adult Friends for Youth

#10 What are the biggest problems facing youth who are presently in the care and custody of the Department of Human Services?

- Not enough adequate placements
- Meeting youths' needs within present case management structure
- Youth turning 18 and not knowing how to live without assistance
- Separation issues, lack of social and independent living skills, chemical abuse, depression, poor education
- Untrained caretakers
- Providing culturally sensitive programming, including staff who are appropriately bilingual, culturally, and ethnically representative of the youths served
- Accessibility of services—geographically inaccessible
- Lack of a subsidy to use during youth's transition from care
- Lack of driver's license

#11 What are the greatest problems facing youths (18-22) who are "on their own" in your geographic area?

- Job security
- Lack of higher education and training opportunities
- Not enough good-paying jobs
- Not being trained for work, finding a place to live, and everyday living skills
- Housing options
- High costs of living
- Becoming homeless
- Lack of public transportation
- Parenting services

#12 Would you be willing to participate in any of the following?

17 (63%) Adolescent mentor program
15 (56%) Community independent living advisory board
17 (63%) Teaching of skills to adolescents
17 (63%) Follow-up contacts by Brendan Assoc. staff
6 (22%) Respondents checked all four boxes.
(These are also counted in the individual areas above.)

Summaries of responses by purchase of service providers, DSS foster parents, and staff would follow in a fashion similar to that of the example above.

BRENDAN ASSOCIATES

Human Services Consultation

Dear Colleague:

Brendan Associates, in concert with the Department of Human Services, is undertaking a survey of individuals involved with youth. These persons are those who, in some manner, support the delivery of adolescent services to children and families within the state. The information will assist in the development of a state plan for adolescent independent living.

"Independent living," in this case, is the reference to services that will assist youth to make the transition from the child welfare system to early adulthood self-sufficiency. Independent living is also referred to as "interdependent" living. Independent and interdependent living programs are relatively "new" service offerings for child welfare. Previously, preparation of adolescents for their transition from foster or residential care had seen little effort nationally. Helping adolescents develop skills—such as getting and keeping a job, cooking, cleaning, personal hygiene, time management, problem solving, decision making, and personal communications—are some of these "new" service offerings.

We are requesting your assistance in taking a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Adolescent Independent Living Survey form. The survey questions are open-ended. Our desire is to gather the opinions of state agency staff, foster parents, service providers, community youth workers, and other youth-serving folks throughout the state.

Please return this survey as soon as possible. If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact me at (919) 489-1351 (address on letterhead, left).

Sincerely,

William V. Griffin
Project Director

4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 489-1351

Adolescent Independent Living Survey

Name: ______________________________

Title: ______________________________

Agency: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

City: ______________________ ZIP: __________

Telephone: (   ) ______________

If the space available below is not adequate, please answer on additional sheets.

1. Do you presently work with adolescents?	☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Do you foresee working with adolescents in the custody of Department of Human Services?	☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do you consider present services for adolescents in the care and custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to be adequate?	☐ Yes ☐ No Please explain.
4. What "new" or additional adolescent services would you like to see offered?	
5. Are there community organizations or agencies in your area that could assist in the delivery of adolescent independent living services?	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe those organizations and how they could be of assistance.
6. Are there local businesses or private sector organizations in your area that are presently providing adolescent services, school incentives, etc., for youth?	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe those efforts.

7	**Are there community organizations or agencies that could be utilized to develop adolescent services in your geographic area?**	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe
8.	**Are there businesses or other private interests in your geographic area that might be receptive to helping to develop adolescent services in the community?**	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe.
9.	**Are there mentor programs for adolescents in your area?**	☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe.
10.	**What are the biggest problems facing youth who are presently in the care and custody of the Department of Human Services?**	
11.	**What are the greatest problems facing youths (18-22) who are "on their own" in your geographic area?**	
12.	**Would you be willing to participate in any of the following? Please check:**	☐ Adolescent mentor program. ☐ Community independent living advisory board. ☐ Teaching of skills to adolescents. ☐ Follow-up contacts by Brendan Associates project staff.

Please complete and return this survey as soon as possible to:

William V. Griffin, Project Director
Brendan Associates
4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707

Thank you.

APPENDIX J

Agency Work Plan

Agency Work Plan

To more comprehensively approach the tasks involved in preparing youths for successful transition to adulthood, agencies need to develop an adolescent independent living program plan (AILP). This plan should encompass all aspects of an AILP. To start this process, an initial work plan for developing an AILP must be formulated.

Goal:

Objective(s): (Need to be behavioral/measurable)

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________

Tasks/Steps/Activities:

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________

Resources Needed:

____

____

____

Action Plan Steps and Time Frames:

STEP 1.

Time Frame

STEP 2.

Time Frame:

STEP 3.

Time Frame:

STEP 4.

Time Frame:

APPENDIX K

Resources

Program Planning and Evaluation

William V. Griffin
Brendan Associates
4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 489-1351

Brendan Associates sponsors professional development seminars and on-site evaluation and program planning consultation on adolescent independent living programming. Seminars are held in the spring and fall of each year at different sites throughout the United States and Canada. On-site consultation services range from work with small, privately operated group homes to large public agencies, such as departments of social services or human resources.

Dorothy I. Ansell
Ansell and Associates
205 Crestwood Lane
Edenton, NC 27932
(919) 482-2937

Ansell and Associates provide a wide range of independent living consultation services. This group specializes in the development of creative skills training experiences for staffs and youths.

Kathi Crowe, Consultant
86 Sefton Drive
Edgewood, RI 02905
(401) 461-5406

Ms. Crowe provides a wide range of independent living consultation services. Specialization includes all types of residential facilities, state and regional child caring organizations or associations, and programs for pregnant teen mothers and fathers.

Ronna Cook
5912 Rossmore Drive
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 564-9228

Ms. Cook specializes in program evaluation. Her work has included large national studies and local and state evaluations on independent living programming.

Mel Breed
United Families
Box 154
Merna, IL 61758
(309) 728-2762

Mr. Breed specializes in all aspects of program development and planning. He has also worked extensively with group homes and other residential facilities on incorporating independent living skills preparation.

William Pinto
11 Woodland Road
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
(203)257-3311

Mr. Pinto has been involved in the development of independent living programming in large (state) systems, group homes, and residential treatment centers. He also has worked extensively in the area of youth assessments and outcome planning.

Mark Kroner
4243 Brookside Avenue
Cincinnati, OH
(513) 681-5406

Mr. Kroner specializes in scattered-site apartment living programs and other types of housing programs for youths, both pre- and post-discharge.

Information/Public Relations Materials

Youth Handbooks and Program Packets

- ***Roads to Choose: A Guidebook for Independent Living*** (1989) and ***A Handbook for Teens in Foster Care*** (May 1990). Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Division of Youth Services, Smith/Wilson Building, 300 SW Oakley, Topeka, KS 66606, (913) 296-4646. Contact person: Janet Davenport.
- ***Guide to Independence: Where to Go When You're on Your Own.*** Monterey County Department of Social Services, Office for Community Services and Children's Services, 1201 Broadway, Seaside, CA 93906, (408) 755-4650.
- ***It's a New Age for You: A Law-Related Publication for Young Adults in Kentucky.*** Fayette County Bar Association, 701 Beechmont Road, Lexington, KY 40502.
- ***A Handbook for Foster Teens.*** Commonwealth of Kentucky, Cabinet for Human Resources, Department for Social Services. Contact: Mike Yocum, 275 East Main Street, 6W, Frankfort, KY 40621, (502) 564-2136.
- ***Youth Yellow Pages: A Self-Referral Directory for Youth.*** United Way of Southeastern New England. United Way Helpline: (401) 351-6500.

Many other state and private child caring agencies have created materials to both promote and explain their programming efforts. In addition, most state bar associations have booklets available on the rights and responsibilities of youths.

Advisory Boards

- **California Youth Connections.** Theresa Cote, Independent Living Skills Training Program, California Community College Foundation, 717 K Street, Suite 505, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 444-2700.
- **Philadelphia Adolescent Initiative Project.** Cheryl Oakman, Temple University, Center for Social Policy and Community Development, 1500 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (215) 686-8810.
- **State of Nebraska, Preparation for Adult Living.** Mary Furnas, Program Coordinator, State of Nebraska, Department of Social Services, Human Services Division, P.O. Box 95026, Lincoln, NE 68509-5026, (402) 471-9434.

  This program conducted a national survey to determine which states were using youth advisory boards and to what extent they were considered to be successful. The survey located 15 operating youth advisory boards as of 1990.

Foundations

- **Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation.** Barbara Polk, Grants Committee Chairman, 515 Fairway View Drive, Prescott, AZ 86303, (602) 445-1204.
- **The Citizens Concerned for Children.** George O. Harper, Executive Director, 3317 S. Wynn Drive, Edmond, OK 73013, (405)348-9034.

Many states have Friends of Foster Care/Children type non-profit organizations that provide money and services for youths in out-of-home care. Developing a similar effort for adolescent independent living programs might be a natural next step.

Program Incentives

Many programs have developed incentives for youths and foster parents to become involved in adolescent independent living programming. The following are examples of just a few of those programs. Contact persons are included.

William Pinto, State Independent Living Coordinator, State of Connecticut
Division of Children and Youth Services
170 Sigourney Street
Hartford , CT 06105
(203) 566-3838

Connecticut provides cash payments to youths upon completion of the life skills training program. This cash payment can be as high as $800.

Mark Kroner, Director
Independent Living Program
New Life Youth Services
6128 Madison Road
Cincinnati, OH 45227
(513) 561-6946

This program provides cash payments to youths as they "complete" modules in a skills program, while living in their own apartments. The program also provides non-cash incentives such as household goods, acquisition of an apartment, etc.

Sharon Rae Watkins, Supervisor
Franklin County Children's Services
Emancipation Department
1951 Gantz Road
Grove City, OH 43123
(614) 275-2571

This program provides cash subsidies to youths to allow them to procure their own apartment living situation. The cash is paid to the youth through a formula based upon the youth's training tasks. The average is $500 per month or $125 per week.

Staff Specialization

William Pinto, State Independent Living Coordinator, State of Connecticut
Division of Children and Youth Services
170 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06105
(203) 566-3838

This state employs Adolescent Specialists in each of the State's Division of Children and Youth Services' regional offices. This program also employs Life Skills Coordinators who provide independent living skills training to youths in out-of-home care.

Merton Chinen
State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services
Program Development Office
810 Richards Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 586-5668

This state is adding (summer of 1992) adolescent specialists for independent living in each branch (county) office.

Sharon Rae Watkins
Franklin County Children's Services
Emancipation Department
1951 Gantz Road
Grove City, OH 43123
(614) 275-2571

This large county has an Emancipation Department that specializes in the operation of the independent living program.

Helen Berry, Supervisor, Adolescent Unit
Durham County Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 810
Durham, NC 27702
(919) 683-3550

Durham has separate units for adolescents. Staff specialize in adolescent issues and have caseloads made up of only adolescents, they also provide independent living programming for youths.

Lee Cornforth
State of Oregon, Department of Human Services
Children's Services Division
198 Commercial Street, SE
Salem, OR 97310-0450

Oregon employs Community Facilitators and Plan Facilitators who coordinate and connect youths with their communities and independent living services.

Many other states and counties as well as private agencies have specializations geared to adolescents and independent living. Contact your local or State Department of Social Services, child care associations or group home association to ascertain which programs are specializing.

Training Curricula and Programs: Staff

There are a wide range of training programs for staffs in existence. In the last few years, many new curricula have been developed geared to staffs and adolescent independent living. The following are just a few of those available.

Pass It On: Helping Staff to Share Knowledge and Skills With Youth

Pass it On helps child welfare workers, youth workers, and foster parents prepare youths for independence. The *Trainer's Manual* covers 18 hours of tangible and intangible skills instruction, plus discussion of team approach, self-esteem, decision making, and assessment tools. The course also introduces a developmentally based model for independent living. The *Participant's Workbook* provides practical activities and tools to apply to daily interaction. Included is a 45-item reference list.

A Professional Development Seminar on *Pass It On*—in either a two or three-day format—is *available from:*

Brendan Associates
4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 489-1351

Texts available from:

National Resource Center for Youth Services
202 West Eighth Street
Tulsa, OK, 74119-1419
(918) 585-2986

Set of Two	$55.00
Participant's Workbook	$15.00
Trainer's Manual	$45.00

Independent Living Program Strategies for the 1990s: Developing a Comprehensive Adolescent Independent Living Program Plan

This program is a two-day professional development seminar that assists staff in formulating a development plan. The seminar helps participants establish clear guidelines for starting an independent living program in public child welfare agencies, residential child-care and youth serving agencies, and mental health or correctional facilities. *Available from:*

Brendan Associates
4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 489-1351

Independent Living for teen Parents

This program is a two-day professional development seminar. It examines the special developmental issues and needs of teen mothers and young fathers, presents an overview of successful teen parent programs, and highlights critical program elements. *Available from:*

Brendan Associates
4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 489-1351

Youth Assessment and Outcome Planning for Independent Living

This program is a two-day professional development seminar. It defines good assessments, the strengths and weaknesses in assessment processes, and identifies problem areas. It also illuminates other factors that affect the long-term goal of achieving independence. The program also assists in obtaining specific tools and resources for doing assessments with youths, transferring assessment information into an Outcome Plan that is specific and measurable, tracking progress, and integrating progress or lack of progress into Outcome Plan revisions. *Available from:*

Brendan Associates
4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 489-1351

Apartment and Other Living Arrangement Options for Youths

This program is a two-day professional development seminar. It presents an overview of the continuum of possible living arrangement options that can be used to prepare young people for self-sufficiency and independent functioning in the community. The seminar also defines independent and transitional living arrangements and services. *Available from:*

Brendan Associates
4324 Thetford Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 489-1351

Creative Life Skills Training I and II

Creative Life Skills Training is a two-day program to help staffs tap into their own creativity. Staffs learn methods and techniques to enhance their group leadership abilities, and participate in and create their own energizing activities that will appeal to all learning styles and learning levels. *Available from:*

Ansell and Associates
205 Crestwood lane
Edenton, NC 27932
(919) 482-2937

Training Curricula: Youths

There are many different types of curricula available from a wide range of sources. The following list includes curricula and companies where catalogs of materials can be obtained for review. Most programs have found the most advantageous approach to be the development of their own curriculum by choosing items that can be packaged to best meet the needs of their program participants.

Speak Out!

Speak Out! is a two-volume, self-contained curriculum for teaching communication skills to youths in a group setting. The *Group Leader's Guide* provides detailed instructions for conducting the 40 different activities contained in the curriculum. The *Participant's Guide* provides all the handouts and worksheets needed to complete the group activities. Both *Guides* are filled with many humorous illustrations to help get the point across. *Speak Out!* is divided into eight sessions. *Available from:*

Independent Living Resources, Inc.
P.O. Box 1013
Edenton, NC 27932
(919) 482-2937 or 489-1351

Leader's Guide	$15.95
Participant's Guide	$5.95

Daniel Memorial Institute Independent Living/Foster Care/Administration Catalog

6700 Southpoint Parkway, Suite 510
Jacksonville, FL 32216
(800) 226-7612

This catalog contains a wide range of materials including computer software programs, curricula, videos, and other independent living resources. Daniel Memorial markets a computer software independent living skills youth assessment system, which provides guidance on the development of Skills Plans for youths. The catalog also describes a supplemental software program that guides staff in the development of Transitional Plans for youths.

Fearon/Janus/Quercus

Special Education Catalog
Harbor Boulevard
Belmont, CA 94002
(800) 877-4283

This catalog describes a wide range of materials for providing life skills training to youths. These are geared to youths who are behind academically and whose reading level is low. Each series of materials lists the reading level needed, with the average ranging from 1.0 to 5.0. Books are reasonably priced with discounts for multiple copies.

J. Weston Walch, Publisher

Special Needs & Remedial Education Catalog: Grades 6-12
321 Valley Street, P.O. Box 658
Portland, ME 04014-0658
(800) 341-6094

The materials in this catalog are geared to the remedial student with special needs. The publications all have reasonable reading levels and, in many cases, the purchase includes permission to photocopy student pages of the reproducible book for the classes of one teacher.

Lakeshore

Lifeskills Catalog
2695 E. Dominquez Street
Carson, CA 90749
(800) 421-5354

This catalog presents materials for youths who aren't responding to a conventional textbook approach—students who are at risk of dropping out, having trouble learning to read or learning English as a second language. Reading levels are presented for almost every product and the levels range from pre-reading to grade 8.5 and are determined by educational specialists using both the Spache and Fry Reading Formulas. Though the reading level is low for most of the texts and books, the interest level for all materials in this catalog runs from junior high school through adult.

JIST Works, Inc.

The Career Resource Catalog
Youth Materials
720 North Park Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3431
(800) 648-JIST

This catalog has hundreds of products that will help young people learn more about themselves and how they relate to occupations and careers. Several of these products can be used as the basis for complete career exploration and decision-making programs. Included are text-workbooks, career reference books, assessment devices, videos, computer software, and instructional aids that will enhance career exploration, career decision making, school and college selection, and job search.

Case Planning

As discussed in the text, existing case plan guidelines are wide-ranging. A few packaged programs will assist agencies in developing a solid base for youths' independent living and transitional plans. Those sources are:

Assessment Packet

The *Assessment Packet* is a 136-page collection of 31 different forms that may be used throughout your independent living program—from the time of application until the time of discharge and follow-up. The forms are organized in five sections:

- Section A: Applications
- Section B: Behavioral Assessments of Candidates (Initial)
- Section C: Contracting and Youth Agreements
- Section D: Behavioral and Narrative Assessments of Youth (Ongoing)
- Section E: Program Evaluation and After-Discharge Assessments

The forms contained in the *Assessment Packet* have been used by a variety of public and private youth-serving agencies around the country. These forms have proven useful to agencies that provide independent living preparation and agencies that supervise youths in independent living arrangements. The forms in the *Assessment Packet* also are available on computer disk in either 5.25" or 3.5" format; each form is contained on a separate file for easy access. *Available from:*

Independent Living Resources, Inc.
P.O. Box 1013
Edenton, NC 27932
(919) 482-2937 or 489-1351

$21.95 (includes shipping and handling)

Software

Independent Living Skills (ILS) System Software and Skills Plans ($995)

The software scores the *ILS* assessments and generates a skill plan for the youth based on assessment results. The *Skill Plan* may be from 1 to 140 pages in length, depending on the youth's skill level. The skill plan contains goals, objectives, and strategies, plus allowing space for time lines and signing of the person responsible for assisting the youth. Specific concrete strategies are written in matter-of-fact, simple language that a foster parent or group home provider can use to assist the foster teen to become proficient in the skill areas.

Supplemental Transitional Software ($195)

The *Transitional Planning Software* is designed to meet Title IV-E Social Security Act requirements and is a supplement to the *Independent Living Skills* Version 3.0 software. This software allows the user to add a comprehensive, individual transition plan to the already existing skill plan. The program walks the user through a process of questions about the youth. A detailed, individual *Transition Plan* is printed out based on the responses to the questions. The plan includes the specific youth information as well as transitional information common to all youths. *Available from:*

Daniel Memorial Institute
6700 Southpoint Parkway, Suite 510
Jacksonville, FL 32216
(800) 226-7612

Volunteers/ Mentors

Mentoring: What's It All About?

Mentoring is a 28-page handbook for foster parents and volunteers who like to spend time with teenagers in foster care. *Mentoring* is written in an easy-to-read question-and-answer format, covering such questions as: Why do young people need mentors? What makes it difficult for young people in foster care to move out on their own? How does self-esteem affect a young person's ability to live independently? How can a mentor help a young person increase self-esteem? What can a mentor do to help a young person become more independent and self-reliant?

Mentoring also provides practical information to enhance training sessions and workshops for volunteer mentors. *Mentoring* presents very basic information that is useful to anyone working with young people. *Available from:*

Independent Living Resources, Inc.
P.O. Box 1013
Edenton, NC 27932
(919) 482-2937 or 489-1351

$4.95 (includes shipping and handling)

Volunteer Mentor Training Program

This text will save many hours in developing a training curriculum for this independent living program component. Volunteers and mentors can be a vital cog in the independent living program. Orienting and training these individuals can be a much easier task with this curriculum/program. Volunteer mentors become acquainted with the foster care system and issues that impact youths in their care through this program, which was developed by the State of Nebraska Independent Living Program. *Available from:*

National Resource Center for Youth Services
202 West Eighth Street
Tulsa, OK 74119-1419
(918) 585-2986

Set of Two	$75
Volunteer Coordinator's Handbook	$70
Participant's Manual	$10

Teen Conferences

Teen Conference Planner's Guide

A successful teen conference can be an empowering experience for both the youth participants and the adult staff. Good planning is the key. The *Teen Conference Planner's Guide* takes the guesswork out of planning: it identifies all the questions that should be asked and answered long before the event takes place. The *Guide* summarizes what has been learned by successful conference planners and provides activities that are guaranteed to be a success at your next youth event.

The *Teen Conference Planner's Guide* is a practical handbook for the entire conference planning committee. Each section ends with a worksheet outlining the questions to be answered and the information to be obtained. Sample youth application forms, conference job description, and conference agendas are included along with a sampling of activities intended to warm up and energize the group. Each activity is described in detail, explaining when and how it may best be used. *Available from:*

Independent Living Resources, Inc.
P.O. Box 1013
Edenton, NC 27932
(919) 482-2937 or 489-1351

State Examples

There are many states that have developed the teen conference aspect of an independent living program. These efforts range from one-day meetings to a full-week camp-like gathering. Some of the conferences are statewide efforts while others are local or regional in scope. The following is a brief list of some of the state efforts. The New York City effort is the development of a consortium of private child-caring agencies.

- **One-Day Programs**
  Connecticut
  New Jersey
  Oklahoma
  New York City
- **Week-Long Programs**
  Texas
  Tennessee
  Pennsylvania
- **Weekend Programs**
  Virginia
  Kentucky
  Alabama
  Durham, North Carolina
  California Community College Skills Programs

Jobs/Vocational Programming

JIST Works, Inc.

JIST is a clearinghouse for information on jobs training materials geared to both adults and youths. See "Training Curricula," above, for a detailed description of JIST and how to obtain their catalog of materials.

Job Clubs

Many programs have developed this model for jobs preparation within their independent living programs. It has proven to be quite successful.

"The job club is a self-help group approach to job-seeking. Job club participants learn proven job-seeking techniques, and practice work habits and interpersonal skills necessary for maintaining employment once it is obtained. Skill acquisition is accomplished through group discussion, role plays, brainstorming, and other activities, with a minimum of lecture. Just as important as the content learned, the group setting supplies the structure, confidence building, and moral support necessary to overcome the setbacks inherent in the job hunting process."

Best of Daily Living 1987-89, page 89

The program comes with a written curriculum and an excellent videotape, which explains and demonstrates how to develop a job club. Additional information on the job club model is *available from:*

The Professional Development Program
School of Social Welfare
Richardson Hall, SUNY Albany
135 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12222

Curriculum	$ 5.00
Videotape	$34.95

Housing Programs

The following are just a few of the many programs offering housing components within their independent living programs.

Scattered Site Housing Situations

Mark Kroner
New Life Youth Services
6128 Madison Road
Cincinnati, OH 45227
(513) 561-6946

Cluster and Scattered Site Housing Situations

DIAL/SELF
Melanie Goodwin, Executive Director
196 Federal Street
Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 774-7054

Subsidy Program - Scattered Site Housing

Sharon Rae Watkins
Franklin County Children Services
1951 Gantz Road
Grove City, OH 43123
(614) 275-2571

Transitional Housing Program: Multiplicity of Living Situations

Rebecca Woods
Larkin Center for Children and Adolescents
1212 Larkin Avenue
Elgin, IL 60123-6098
(708) 695-5656

Cluster, Scattered Site, and Multiplicity of Other Options

Don Foster
Project Prepare
Daniel Memorial Independent Living Institute
3725 Belfort Road
Jacksonville, FL 32216
(904) 353-5293

Follow-up/ Post-Discharge Services

The following agencies offer some type of follow-up after discharge for youths:

New York State Department of Social Services

New York provides follow-up for up to six months after a youth leaves the care and custody of the Department.

Starr Commonwealth Schools, Albion, Michigan and Van Wert and Columbus, Ohio

This private, voluntary child-caring facility provides written follow-up for their participants at three- and twelve-month intervals. The format is to contact the youth (or his or her parents, sibling(s), extended family, caseworker, etc.) via telephone to ascertain how he or she is doing. This method is used for statistical data only. In concert with the telephone contact, a "real" follow-up and after-care is conducted by staff making monthly visits to the youth's home, school, employer, etc., for up to a year after he or she leaves care.

Alison Gil Lodge, Manchester, Connecticut

This group home for young women provides transitional services and after-care for one year post-discharge. Alison Gil has worked out a per diem rate that allows the last two months of payments to be budgeted for continued staff contacts over twelve months post-discharge.

Federal Amendments to the *Social Security Act*

These recent amendments have allowed states to expend federal funds for follow-up with youths up to their twenty-first birthdays. The state of Hawaii is one state that is considering extending this to the youth's twenty-second birthday.

Many other programs across the country have follow-up components this short listing is just a start on identifying those agencies.

Special Groups

Teen Mothers

DIAL/SELF
Melanie Goodman, Executive Director
196 Federal Street
Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 774-7054

Lawrence Hall
Phyllis Shadwick, Program Director
65 E. Wacker Place, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 346-3383

Handicapped Youths

State of Oregon
Children's Services Division &
Vocational Rehabilitation Division
Lee Comforth, Independent Living Coordinator
198 Commercial Street, S.E.
Salem, OR 97310-0450
(503) 378-4452

Youth Participation

Thanks to Kathlyn Thorp, State Coordinator, Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, and Associates for Youth Development of Tucson, Arizona, for the information on youth participation and this brief bibliography.

An Approach to Youth Participation
(Pub. #OHD/OYD 75-26044)

An Introductory Manual on Youth Participation for Program Administrators
(Pub. #OHD/OYD 76-26045)

Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Youth Development
U.S. Government Printing Office

Youth Involvement: A Challenge for Communities

Lisa Brunette
Wisconsin Association for Youth, Inc.
30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 908
Madison, WI 53703

Youth Participation in Adult Committees

Kathlyn Thorp
Positive Youth Development
30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 908
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 255-6351

General Resources and Agencies

Following is a list of the agencies, programs, and resources mentioned in the text, but not necessarily listed in either the "Citations" or previously in this Appendix.

Daily Living

Daily Living is the only national newsletter devoted exclusively to adolescent independent living programming. Published quarterly, *Daily Living* gives you information about:

- Innovative Programs
- Resource Materials
- Training Events
- Policy Issues
- Research Findings
- Planning

Many articles are written by practitioners who relate their own program experiences in developing and implementing new services to youths. Contact persons and telephone numbers or addresses are provided to make it easy for direct follow-up with a profiled program. A "Clip & Save" page in each issue provides detailed descriptions of activities that can be used immediately with teens.

Subscription Rates (U.S.):	
One year	$19
Two years	$35
Subscription Rates (Foreign):	
One year	$28 (U.S. funds)
Two years	$45 (U.S. funds)

Available from:

Independent Living Resources, Inc.
P.O. Box 1013
Edenton, NC 27932
(919) 482-2937 or 489-1351

National Independent Living Association

NILA is a newly formed organization made up of public and private sector independent living programs. Public agency state independent living coordinators and private sector administrators and vendors have formed an association devoted to the development of adolescent independent living programs. The Association has developed an electronic bulletin board in which members can sign on to gain or dispense information about AILP.

The Association is supported through the National Resource Center for Youth Services (NRCYS), The University of Oklahoma, 202 West Eighth Street, Tulsa, OK 74119-4119, (918) 585-2986. Membership rates are on a sliding scale based upon a program's budget or a prospective member's position within an agency. Contact NRCYS for further information.

National Association of Former Foster Children

This organization publishes a quarterly newsletter called *Challenges*. Subscription rates range from $15 to $50. Contact:

NAFFC
P.O. Box 060410
New Dorp Station
Staten island, NY 10306
(718) 727-3250

South Bronx Human Development Organization, Inc.

SBHDO Independent Living Skills Center
Karolyn Gould, Executive Director
One Fordham Plaza, Suite 900
Bronx, New York 10458-5871
(212) 295-5501

The Independent Living Skills Center has been operated by SBHDO since 1985. The Center operates a New York City wide information clearinghouse and resource center for voluntary foster care agencies and community-based service providers. It collects, organizes, disseminates, and provides access to state-of-the-art independent living program models, multi-media education materials, training resources, and youth-oriented materials. The Center also publishes a quarterly newsletter, called *Independent Living*.